
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<http://books.google.com>



C1236.39.10

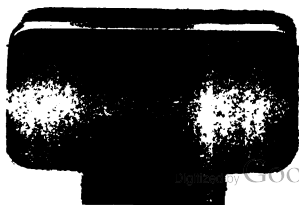


Harvard College Library

FROM

W. S. Appleton,
Cambridge.

7 May, 1894.



INSTRUCTION

AND

ENCOURAGEMENT

FOR

Lent.

BY THE REV.

John H. Hobart

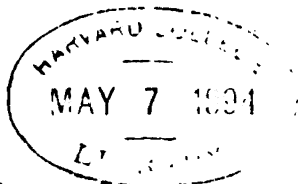
J. H. HOBART, D.D.

NEW YORK:

DANIEL DANA, JR., 381 BROADWAY.

1859.

~~W. 7720~~
C 1236.39.10
✓



*W. S. Appleton,
Cambridge.*

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year Eighteen Hundred
and Fifty-nine,

By J. H. HOBART,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

RENNIE, SHEA & LINDSAY,
STEREOTYPERS AND ELECTROTYPERS,
81, 83, & 85 CENTRE-STREET,
New York.

P R E F A C E.

THE writer of the following pages hopes that enough will be found in them to justify their title.

He has not attempted a complete view of the character and duties of Lent, nor pretended to furnish those who would keep it, with a systematic and detailed method of so doing. It was his purpose originally to make this volume somewhat larger, and to include in a second part a practical and devotional companion to the season. It seemed better, however, to ascertain first whether a less comprehensive plan would prove acceptable to any considerable proportion of those who desire counsel of this sort. To them, therefore, this little work is submitted, and to their service it is dedicated, with diffidence as to its capacity to attain the desired end, yet in an earnest purpose to present a view of the subject which may be worked out, indeed, far more satisfactorily by each reader for himself, but which, once adopted,

will engage him, heart and soul, in the true observance of the season.

Lent is the most characteristic feature of the Church's system, as, indeed, it must be, if that system be a true correlative of the scheme, if scheme it can be called, of the world's disorder. The Church is the embodiment of our LORD's Prayer, that His disciples may be kept from the evil that is in the world. The most appropriate emblem of the evil which our Lord thus deprecated, as is shown by the frequent mention of *fire* in Holy Scripture, and its adoption into the current language of mankind, when speaking of this and kindred subjects, is expressed in that one word. From the slight flush upon the cheek that betokens the rising inflammation, to the raging fever that consumes our mortal frame, a parallel is exhibited to the progress of the devouring heat with which the course of our moral constitution is set on fire, and which burns on, through time and eternity, till every substance left within its power is utterly destroyed. It is to the present action of this fire that the passages in Holy Scripture refer, from which has been taken the phrase of "a brand plucked from the burning."* The dreadful reality of the future pun-

* Zech. iii. 2. St. Jude, 28. Amos, iv. 11, refers to deliverance from outward perils.

ishment is, indeed, the ultimate cause of fear, but our Saviour's concern was for the present condition of man, exposed to the earlier attacks of the deadly disorder. This evil can be remedied: *that* is hopeless. Among His instruments for this purpose, the exercises of penitence are obviously, as they are necessarily, most characteristic of the practical system of salvation. Faith, Hope, and Love assume in these exercises their distinctive forms, as pertaining to this state of trial.

Now, in the special season of penitence, the first office of Faith is to convince us of the real facts of our earthly estate, and of the right mode of treating them; of Hope, to encourage us amid the difficulties that rise in the course of discipline; of Love, to warm and gladden our hearts by the thought of Who it is that calls us to take up the Cross of self-subjugation. From this point of view I have endeavored to look over the season of Lent, and to suggest some thoughts that may tend to convince and persuade any persons of doubtful or reluctant minds who may see these pages, that Lent is the just and necessary correlative of this world's disordered condition; that in it the system of salvation concentrates its vigor; and that to enter upon it thoroughly, is not only to be wise and secure for the future,

but to be immediately and really happy. Let such readers only understand beforehand that this volume does not pretend to treat adequately so great a theme, but only to present a few suggestions towards its treatment.

Two sermons are also herewith printed, which were prepared in the ordinary course of parochial duty, without the remotest thought of publication. They seemed, however, to make the end of the volume correspond closely to its opening sections, and to bring out the point to which the whole subject tends. They are submitted, therefore, to the reader in the unaltered form in which they were delivered.

CONTENTS.

(SEE INDEX AT CLOSE OF THE VOLUME.)

	PAGE
1. <i>This life a fragment</i>	9
2. <i>Our moral being integral, not fragmentary</i>	23
3. <i>Sinful actions various ; the principle of evil one</i>	47
4. <i>Lent interrupts worldly happiness</i>	72
5. <i>Lent aims at revival</i>	85
6. <i>Public duties of Lent</i>	102
7. <i>Private duties of Lent</i>	119
8. <i>Lent not burdensome</i>	135
9. <i>The religious life hidden from the world</i>	155
10. <i>The religious life to be cheerfully chosen in Christ's fellow- ship</i>	170
SERMON I.	
<i>Integrity, the believer's hope and end</i>	189
SERMON II.	
<i>The perfect work of patience</i>	206

INSTRUCTION FOR LENT.

I.

THIS LIFE A FRAGMENT.

WHAT would be a true description of the difference between the present earth and the Garden of Eden?

It might be given in a single sentence. It might be said that Eden was a place of perfect and uninterrupted happiness, but that the world now is full of misery, and never affords enjoyment without a break or to the full extent of man's capacity. Or, instead of thus summing up the difference in one word, the description might run into a number of details, in each one of which would be found an expressive token of the changed condition of mankind.

Infirm of health, dependent on changes of the atmosphere, measuring his daily food in precise proportions and quality, enduring the taste of nauseous drugs, and thinking much gained if this day is not quite so feeble, and

this night not quite so restless as the previous one, the sick man says that there was no disease in Eden, and imagines the very distinction of its felicity to be that man walked there in ample vigor of body and mind, and yielded to the impulses of his nature without fear of ill results. Faint with toil, loaded with obligations, put where more is required of him than he has strength to fulfil—what a paradise was that, is the thought of another, where man's sole work was to watch and further the processes of nature in a genial clime, with his mind free to receive the lessons of power and beauty from the life displayed around him, and to dwell upon the ideas of a gracious Providence so variously suggested. Stinted as to food, tattered in clothing, forced to live in a hovel or crowd together, with others like himself, where warmth and shelter are procured at the price of scenes that offend every sense—the poor man feels that, not Eden, but Heaven would be to him the name of a place where the trees bent down to bestow on him their wholesome fruits in measureless abundance, and the outer air breathed only pleasure, and invitations of delight greeted him wherever his eyes or feet were turned. Disgusted at the results of his own misguided judgment or ungoverned passions, or suffering keenly from

the effects of similar faults in others—another man pictures the repose and undisturbed order of the life in Paradise, as its most striking contrast with this turbulent and ill-regulated world. And thus every affliction in body or mind, while it lasts, gives rise to the feeling that the bitterness of earth is concentrated in that particular form, and that to be free from it would be happiness like that which our first father enjoyed. While at least once in each man's life, if not much oftener, the idea of death dominates over every other cause of anxiety, and presents that one object at the close of our days, as constituting the grand difference between the world as we behold it, and the unlimited scene of happiness on which, before he sinned, it was Adam's privilege to look.

It is not to be denied that these tokens of the vast change in the condition of our race, as they are most obvious so do they fill us with the deepest concern. They touch directly all our dearest interests on earth. We are all alive to their manifold relations to the earthly objects of our affection. Disease, toil, the pressure of care, the working of evil passions, and the ravages of death, engage our feelings on behalf of our kind as well as of ourselves. They are naturally first thought of when we

name the difference between Adam's blissful estate and our own. But there are other marks of the difference which, though not so conspicuous, are more significant, and from which conclusions may be drawn that are themselves the source of practical consequences that reach to the whole extent of our being. It will suffice for the end I have in view, to name two of these less obvious but more significant features of the contrast between this world and Eden.

The life which Adam there began, was the beginning of an existence that was naturally fitted to go on forever, without interruption. Our first Parent entered then upon his true and proper life—that immortality for which his Maker formed him. It was a state of trial also, but not such as we mean when we call this world a state of trial. There appears no reason to think that there was any real difficulty in it; that Adam and Eve found it hard to keep the terms of obedience which God laid upon them. The greatness of their fault was in its wilfulness. There was nothing untoward in their condition, nothing to afflict either mind or body. Amid all-abundant ministrations of pleasure, there was but a single restriction. In every thing else Man was free to follow his nature. One simple test of his perfect obedi-

ence constituted his trial. Such is the account which God has given us of Eden, and we are not to add to or take from it, but to regard it as complete and sufficient for the purposes of such reasoning as the plain letter of the narrative supplies. It is a supposition beyond the letter of the narrative, though not improbable, that, had Adam remained faithful, an advancement to a more glorious if not happier condition would have been granted to him. Whether it would or not, his blissful existence would have been continued. The original design of his creation would have been carried out and completed, without any break or hinderance or delay. His life, from its first instant, onward through the unending ages, would have been integral—one and undivided.

But, in contrast with this, that *would* have been, that in idea *was* to be, that in the nature of things *might* and *should* have been, we see a most marked difference in our present state of being. It is broken off, so to speak, from the main body of our life. By a violent fracture, our threescore years and ten are separated from the rest of our existence. We begin to live, as Adam did, with various faculties and full of energy to fulfil the purposes of our existence, when, suddenly, just as we have begun to act, and have learned to avail ourselves of

our opportunities, the ability to do so ceases; the combination of physical and spiritual powers is broken up; our bodies return to the dust, and our souls are carried to some unknown region, there to exist in an unnatural severance from that material part which as much belongs to the creature, Man, as his soul itself. This happens after we have lived a very few years. Were they many instead of few, were they counted by hundreds, as the years of our fathers before the Flood, the proportion which they would bear to the unlimited Future of our being, would show them to be worthy of estimation, only as the mere beginning. It is, literally, a fragment of our existence. We begin to live, and then very soon we die, and our being is held as it were in suspense, till at the Resurrection, soul and body are united again, and then indeed we live on, forever. Herein is just the difference between Life as it began in Eden, and as it begins on this present earth. There, it would have gone on without a break: here, it breaks and must begin again. And this small broken-off piece, at the beginning, is all that we yet know of Life.

In close connection with this idea there is another, not immediately obvious as this is, but contributing even more to render the contrast striking between this world and Paradise.

Not only was Adam's life, as it began, continuous with all his life to come, and smoothly passing on into any new and higher stage of it that might have been in reserve, but every thing else in Eden held the same harmonious and natural connection with the Future. The life that pervaded all Nature was like the life of man, subject to no violent interruption, but proceeded with an even pace on its proper way. No part of the new-created world, not even of its material substance, was subject to dislocation or perversion or departure in the least degree from its true design. All its parts were suited, not only each to the other, but all together to their onward progress through eternity, and to such natural transitions as the beneficent Lord of all had prepared for them. Were the means of animal enjoyment provided in Eden? In so far as he desired them, they ministered to man's true life, and forwarded him on his course of bliss. Did the countless variety of earthly objects invite his attention, engage him in their pursuit, and furnish him with occupation for his thoughts and time? All such paths led in the true direction of his proper being. There were no labyrinths in Eden; no by-paths that ran contrary to the Garden's plan and ended in a pitfall, or in remote and profitless solitude. Such employ-

ment for his mind and affections as outward objects furnished, worked in with the life of obedience, gratitude, and praise for which our first Father was created. Whether he heeded the invitations of external nature or the inward promptings of his own heart, he was equally sure of fulfilling the purpose of his being.

I believe this description of the world when first created to be not only warranted but required by the brief sacred account of it.* There is but one thing to be named as an ex-

* Dr. S. R. Maitland, in a volume of very ingenious and suggestive essays touches on this point, and questions the correctness of the ordinary ideas concerning the state of man before the Fall. He says that "we cannot prove and have no right to assume that Adam was in a state of perfection," or that "his eating the forbidden fruit was 'man's first disobedience.'" He deems it a mere assumption that Adam was able to keep the other laws of God any more than the one respecting the tree, and seems to doubt whether he "was placed in this world in a state of probation." (Eruvin. pp. 80, 81, 92.)

In regard to this it is surely sufficient to observe: 1, that God pronounced every thing that he had made very good—which is as near perfection as can be; 2, that to give man free range of the garden except in one thing was necessarily, as long as it lasted, a state in which his virtue was put to proof; 3, that a narrative that sets forth *one* (and but one) thing, slight in its apparent form, as the cause of man's ruin, virtually sets forth the singleness and easiness of that test as the ample explanation of the results of a failure to abide it, and as the full vindication of God's justice in exposing man to such a form of danger; 4, that the account in the Book of Genesis of Man's first estate reads as if complete respecting the points on which it touches; and, 5, that it is as much taking from

ception to the perfect scene thus displayed: the temptation to be not content with the whole range of the garden, and to pass within the line drawn round one prohibited tree. This one test of man's one weak point, this one danger amid the otherwise complete security, is the sole drawback on the utmost the mind can picture of the perfection of man's first estate.

Wherein does his present condition differ from this ?

The difference is precisely that which we would expect to find in a world that has been cut off, in a manner, from the rest of the universe. It is no longer of the same constitution with the system that is to succeed it. It is not, as Eden was, one system with all that is to come after. It is a separate and fallen system, that has carried down with it, indeed, many excellent things, the traces of its former state, but has surrounded them with evil, and joined to them other things in which evil predominates. So that, in one word, this present world cannot be trusted in any one respect, as Eden could be trusted in all respects but one. We cannot trust ourselves in it, as Adam had

God's Word to allege its incompleteness in bar of conclusions drawn from what it *does* say, as it would be adding to it to insist on conclusions based on mere supposition of what it *might* say.

liberty to trust himself in Eden. Its good cannot extricate itself from the evil. Its evil for the time is the prevailing principle. Its course is not smoothly onward. It comes to a sudden, violent, inevitable end.

Thus we get our answer to the question in what this present world differs from the world before the Fall. It is not enough to speak of sickness, poverty, care, toil, vice, and death. No enumeration of separate afflictions can convey the idea of that radical distinction, which is expressed in saying that this life is but a fragment of our being, and that the constitution of this world has been fatally disordered by the violent severance of the relation it once held to the vast universe of order, light, and peace.

But mankind are not disposed to favor this idea. They are not willing to admit that there has been so wide a departure from the spirit and the conditions of the original creation. Most men wish to live here, as Adam did in Eden, and to let inward propensity run to meet outward invitation, as though each would be true to the other and to their own real welfare. They grudge the loss of any pleasure. They very often speak of the great sacrifices of religion, and seem to think that a reasonable man may well hesitate to make them. They almost assume that, because penitence is ar-

duous and prayer is irksome, when regarded from their point of view and undertaken in their spirit, it amounts to a dispensation from these duties, since what is so difficult and distasteful can hardly be required. They protest against the thought that life is to be so thrown away. They succeed in confirming themselves in a state of easy indifference to this whole subject. Their example and confident language uniting with his own inward weakness of faith, succeed in bewildering many a faint-hearted believer, who loves this life, and yet cannot forget how distinct is the revelation of a life hereafter to be won by the free expenditure of what he now possesses. A contracted range of vision is thus substituted for that sphere of the universe amid which man is placed. The final adjustment of loss and gain is attempted to be made at a point where, in reality, the computation of gains should only be begun—at the end of this brief span of Time, and the beginning of a measureless Eternity.

If we would be thoroughly and heartily religious, we must treat this world and this life as what they are—a mere fragment of our existence. It is as if in setting out on what should and might have been a pleasant and prosperous journey, one were suddenly to find himself involved in some serious error—off his

route, plunged in marshes, caught by darkness—and yet should insist upon it that, then and there, his looked-for pleasures and successes should be realized, because they were part of his original plan, and he was capable of enjoying them, and it was intolerable that the object of his journey should be so lost. A wiser man would say—let me cease struggling on with such hopes in this direction. Let this day go, with its losses, whatever they may be. The proposed journey is not an impossibility, because I have made a false start. The true way lies open still. My effort now must be to reach it. At this moment pleasure is out of the question. To get upon the true route, at the proper place, through whatever difficulties, is my sole aim, at present. That attained, I will begin again the journey I intended, and will look upon this abortive movement, not as marring its completeness and proving that my plans were vain, but only as an antecedent trial through which it was decreed that I should pass. It is thus that Man made immortal, was designed to begin an uninterrupted course of happiness. That course is still before him, endless and without interruption. Only at the outset a break occurred; a small portion of his days was separated from the otherwise unbroken duration of his existence. Is he to

expect that portion to be complete in itself? Is he to strive to realize his whole life in that little fragment? He argues rightly, that God never framed any creature on purpose to be unhappy, even for a brief period. His conclusion is sound, that his nature, capable of holding pleasurable relations with objects around him, requires that such relations be formed. Does Religion debar him from such happiness? Does Revelation, that shows him unending ages of such a happy and peaceful condition, teach otherwise than in harmony with nature, because he is told that, for a brief time, the full, proper, and designed use of his powers is in abeyance; that he is passing through a disordered and fragmentary state of being; that his life has not yet truly began; that the work of extrication from these temporary embarrassments requires that many, if not most, of the advantages of the present be unsought or relinquished?

I have somewhat anticipated, in this course of remarks, thoughts which will occur more fitly hereafter—yet they follow naturally what has gone before. They present its practical result. When we put ourselves deliberately and earnestly face to face with the truth that this earth is in no sense an Eden, and in that truth read the most clear announcement that

gayety up to the height of our temperament, and liberty to the extent of our wish, and ease of mind in the midst of earthly delights, are utterly irreconcilable with peace at the last and forever; and when the sense that this is really so first gains hold of our mind, let us not meet it with a blank countenance and a sinking heart, as though our just rights had been wrung from us, and the joy of life were gone forever. Small consolations seem to me out of place here. Anxious averments that, really, all has not gone, but that a little of this temporal pleasure, and much of that earthly advantage, are left us, come far short of what the mind requires. It may be that such reckoning will be verified. But there is a larger method of dealing with the whole subject, which the truth presented in the previous pages suggests to us. Let all earthly joy, if it must be so, depart without another thought. It is not much, it cannot possibly be much, at the most. This is but Time, and Eternity is to follow. This is not our life, but a confused struggle towards our life. When that life begins indeed, the world without and nature within us shall be in perfect correspondence, and Eden, and more than Eden, shall be restored.

II.

OUR MORAL BEING INTEGRAL, NOT FRAGMENTARY.

IF the view of this life given in the preceding section as that which we obtain through Revelation be correct, there can be no refusal of its wholesome lessons on the part of any thoughtful or reasonable man. He should prove at once its efficacy to remove or lessen his natural concern at the privations that come upon him, or that he is called to take upon himself, in this very brief space at the outset of life, under circumstances that have strangely given it a character utterly at variance with all the unending remainder of our existence; with what all eternity may be if this short but anxious introduction to it be wisely treated. I am not establishing these facts of revelation, but only restating them with certain plain conclusions to be drawn from them, in the hope of leading some minds along the beaten path of religious truth, with a closer consideration than heretofore of its features. I assume, therefore, that the reader believes this life to be but the fragment which Revelation shows us that it is. Whether he

believes it or not, I am sure he would be baffled in attempting to give an account of it that would so well agree with the present condition of the world. The merest philosopher can say no more for this life than that it contains glimpses of a peaceful future and foretastes of immortal bliss, amid the turbulence and bitterness of mortal cares. Can he draw any picture of it so true to the obvious facts as Religion's representation of the journey of life, of which the outset is marked by strange errors, and is in a manner lost, so that its steps have to be retraced and a new beginning made, after which the blind miry paths and untoward incidents of that false start shall be as though they had never been?

There is more to be made of this truth, however, than has yet been mentioned, as on further consideration of it will appear.

This life is but a fragment of our existence.

A fragment implies an unnatural and forcible separation from the body of which it was a part. We do not ask to have a fragment gently taken away. We say—*break* off a piece, and only a piece so broken is properly termed a fragment.

Again, there are fragments of two sorts. Suppose that a globe of some firm substance were exploded by a sufficient internal force

into a thousand portions: whatever disturbance of grain and fibre were the result, would be seen in all the remnants. Such utter ruin of the entire body would leave its traces, not only in the number of the fragments, but in the torn and strained substance of each separate piece.

It is easy to imagine another case, however, in which all the marks of violence would be seen in but one portion, while the remainder would be compact, unchanged, unmoved, as before. Such would be the result if, from some firmly fixed and strongly coherent mass, an edge or projecting point were to be rent away. How far into the main body would the effects of the fracture reach? Does the granite of the mountain feel the chipping of the geologist's hammer? When the end of a twig of tough and pliant wood is twisted and pulled and worked off by the straining and tearing of fibre after fibre, does the great trunk feel it? Do the strong limbs, or even the slender branches feel it?—or the very twig itself, further than an inch or two from the point of fracture? This illustration somewhat fails here, for the broken-off bit of stone or wood may not be thoroughly disorganized by the process, but we can conceive of substances of such a nature that a force sufficient

to grasp and tear away a small part would crush that part in so doing, and alter its very structure, while only a little wound upon the surface would mark the place whence it was taken. In such a case there would be but one fragment, for that term could not be thought of in relation to the main body and to its unaltered structure. All the serious consequences of the act of violence would be confined to the broken-off portion. A fracture of this sort would be thus distinguished from that total destruction, which left no token of the original body but the number of the scattered fragments.

And now, to connect these distinctions with the subject in hand.

In his original creation, Man's existence was continuous, of the same substance unimpaired throughout; all the component parts being established in harmonious relations to each other. The constitution and the life of Man were pronounced good, and from that happy beginning they stretched on into the boundless and blissful eternity. Had there been no forfeiture on Adam's part of this unmarred perfection of our being, there would have been no disturbance of the order of creation. Every thing would have gone on, as it began, without interruption, and the World as we

know it, and Time as we pass though it, would have had no place or history. But the interruption occurred. The act of disobedience made the break between Time and Eternity; between Earth and Heaven. We are now in a fragmentary condition. The shock, however, that so changed Earth and Man, produced no change in that eternal system of things wherein God intended that the new race should have a high position. The race were not so soon added to it. There will not be so many of mankind to enter it finally. But it has kept its unchanged constitution and the perfect coherence of its parts; it rests on its immovable foundations—that eternal world of joy and glory, where, with undeviating fidelity to their great Original, the creatures of God display in full proportions every moral and spiritual attribute which He has imparted to them. Such, at the moment of the Fall, was the system into which Man and the Earth which was his abode, had been introduced; so it remains and ever shall continue. It is God's own perfect and eternal world of glory. We were introduced into it; our world ran smoothly into it; we were made one with it, in nature and principle. And of its unmovable and immeasurable bulk, now that we have been violently rent away from it, we are but a dis-

torted fragment, showing, in the altered structure of these poor remains of Earth and Time, all the signs of disturbance and change that were inevitable on the occurrence of such a break. The substance is still here. Here is the moral nature still; here are powers and capacities, and the means and opportunities for their exercise. But their completeness is no more. The displacement of parts is universal. The effects of the violent severance of the world from its original condition appear, in some shape and to some extent, everywhere. Man shows his origin, and the whole condition of earth tells of its beginning, only as a fragment, crumbling and disintegrating at the foot of the precipice, tells of the mighty mass and solid structure of its native rock. Almost as well might the torn and displaced fibres of a piece of wood, crushed beneath powerful pressure, be taken for the measure of the size, compactness, strength, and beauty of the parent tree, as the measure of our moral proportions be obtained from this minute and disturbed fraction of our life.

We come to this conclusion then, on viewing in this light, the truth of the fragmentary condition of this present world.

The standard of our moral nature can only be found in that vast and complete system for

which we were at first created. This disordered world and contracted time cannot furnish it. To be of such a nature is the inestimable gift of our Creator. Because we have it, we are not mere animals studying only the wants and pleasures of a sensual existence, neither are we beings of mere intellect capable of knowledge and thought, but incapable of affection and the joys of a social state. In it, more than in any thing else pertaining to man, we trace the image of God after which we were created. To understand therefore our own moral nature rightly, is of the utmost importance to our understanding Him who made us, as well as the use of His gifts. To develop it must necessarily be our highest duty, as it should be our greatest pleasure. No unhappier mistake can be made than to fancy that we are not called to such a work, or that it can bring us to no substantial result. Yet I have heard the idea that the very business of education consists in *educing* or leading forth this higher part of man's nature, indignantly rejected, under circumstances which showed the unaffected horror produced by the idea, and indicated to what extent honest feeling on this subject, was engaged on the side of a mere misconception. For surely the idea must be utterly miscon-

ceived to be so abhorred. If it were asserted that there is any thing in human nature worth developing that does not proceed from God, or that the process of drawing it out can be effectual without the aid of the HOLY SPIRIT, or that the goodness so produced can be independent of the spiritual presence of CHRIST in the soul, the believer in Revelation could not too soon or strongly mark his abhorrence of such a notion. It must be this that some persons are so earnest to reject. But why should they confound with so gross an error the simple truth that man has a moral nature which, however disordered, is the gift of God, and that no nobler or more needful work can occupy us than to seek the restoration, so far as may be, of His image in our hearts, valuing it all the while as His, and humbly depending for the least measure of success, on the grace we obtain only through the mediation of our Saviour? In taking this view of the matter, we neither obscure God's perfections nor diminish our sense of the reality of our fallen condition, and of our dependence upon Divine Grace. In taking it, we meet the requirements of a fact undisputable and present to the consciousness of every man; a fact to the existence of which every precept of the Gospel is a witness. Our nature is not sensual only, nor intellectual only, but moral

also. The most brutish of mortals has this nature—none the less a gift and Divine, because of its perversion. It may be considered self-evident that the possession of such a gift is a talent of which the utmost possible improvement will be required. And when called to give an account of it, can any justification be imagined of his answer, who shall say, only, that he never really considered himself as being responsible for or as having such a gift at all; or of his, who, conscious of having it, took for the measure of its use a mere worldly standard, and can only profess that he hid it in the earth.

It is of the last importance, then, that we should ascertain the correct standard of our moral nature, by which to measure ourselves as moral beings. It cannot be found entire or distinct, or to any reliable or serviceable degree among the fragments of our earthly condition. Especially is it evident that any standard of morality that has respect to this world alone, and our relations to our fellow-men only as inhabitants of earth, is wretchedly defective. Beyond us, in the world invisible and eternal, lies the region of morals, vast, undisturbed, whole—notwithstanding this petty fraction of space and time. There we shall see what the moral creation really is, as it came from the

hand of God. Its solid foundations are there, its active principles move equably in their appointed courses, and the sure unimpaired results are displayed in forms of light and sanctity. Is it possible, then, that any thoughtful man should take his measures of morality from the scene of this temporary disorder, rather than from that state where the elements of moral character exist in all their proper completeness and perfection? As well might one form his estimate of the fertility and scenery of earth from the black lavas, the wide chasms, the sulphurous pools and ruined edifices of some volcanic region, when only a narrow strait divided him from the fair land of peace and beauty.

Assuredly, the true measures of our morality are to be found in that state of being for which we were originally designed; in which, had Adam not sinned, we should now be using our moral faculties; into which we hope yet to enter; and in which, alone, there is room to ascertain the length and breadth and height and depth of any moral principle. Our morals must be those of our original creation, or we are still immoral men.

In laying so much stress upon the correct measurement of our moral conduct, it might seem as if there were no need to explain the

truth of our moral nature. To say that we are moral beings appears, at first sight, almost as clear as saying that we have two hands and two feet. Yet when one considers how loose the common talk is on this, as on all subjects that require any thought at all, and how often the shadow of an idea is accepted for its substance, it does not seem quite so certain that every reader, on being called upon would be able to show, in a clear description, the two hands and two feet, the distinct members and the full proportions of this particular idea. The point is at least worth a brief consideration in this place, as it will tend to enforce still more strongly the conclusion with which I am at present concerned.

For the most part, there is no aim at accuracy in such hasty thoughts as are given to this subject. Most persons content themselves with a vague and general contrast between morality and immorality, the sole distinct point in which is that an immoral man is licentious, or a drunkard, or dishonest. Their impression of the truth that man is a moral being is about summed up in saying that he is capable of being chaste, sober, honest, and the like.

If this is not enough, the generality of intelligent people are satisfied with a definition from the Dictionary. They turn to Dr. John-

son, it may be, as a special authority in such a question, and learn from him that the relations of human society determine the sphere of morals. Morality, according to this account of it, has respect to the duties of social life, and man is a moral being inasmuch as he is capable of ruling his conduct among his fellows, by the distinctions of right and wrong. In this common acceptance of the word, to be moral is the practical answer to the question in the Catechism concerning our duty to our neighbor.

It would be better to say that, without restriction of circumstance, man is able to distinguish between right and wrong: better still, that he is capable of conforming his conduct to the rule of right or of wrong, in its widest extent, as comprehending both this world and the next. We may enter, however, yet further into the heart of the subject than these brief definitions carry us.

Man is, in himself, good or bad. He is this, in himself, before any consideration is had of things external to himself. This is his nature. He is good, or he is bad; or he is inwardly and steadily tending towards the one or the other condition; or he is wavering for awhile, before it is decided finally what his condition shall be. But this, in one form or another, he

is and must be, because of his moral nature: not because he is living, for plants live and are not this; not because he has senses, for animals have senses and experience nothing of this; not because he is intelligent, for intellect can be imagined quite apart from good and evil, but because he is moral. Because he is so made and thus has his being, he sees all possible lines of conduct as either right or wrong. He regards every external object as good or evil, or as ministering thereto. And most of all, as his thoughts, desires, feelings, and intentions, first come up to the light from depths within him which no eye but his Maker's can fathom, they possess moral properties: they are right or wrong, good or bad, on the instant of their first appearing, before they have issued in the very slightest manifestation of word or deed.

Such being the nature of man, whence did he obtain it? Who but God could impart this inward discernment of good and evil, and these instinctive apprehensions of right and wrong? These constitute his very characteristic among other creatures on the earth, and how can it be that the distinguishing trait of an immortal creature should appear only in his relations in Time and towards his fellow-men, and not towards the eternal God, with reference to

whose nature solely the good is distinguished from the bad?

When I speak, then, of a moral being, the first and main thought is of his relations to Almighty God. When I say that man has a moral nature, I refer to his capacity to be inwardly and really such as God is, in those properties of His nature which He imparted to Man. When I use the term "morality," I mean that which constitutes character to be either good or bad, independently of time or circumstance: good or bad though earth and its relations were to vanish instantly, and leave that character what it would be then in the sight of God, amid the realities of Eternity. It does not seem possible rightly to conceive of these moral ideas otherwise than in this shape, or to express them truly in language of narrower signification.

Yet a much narrower use of language on this subject is very general, and is both the cause and the token of a serious misapprehension of the truth. This mode of thought and expression is a legacy from the dead philosophy of ancient Paganism, and might well have been refused by the Christian science of life. I refer to the employment of the words "moral" and "morality" in distinction from the words "religious" and "religion." There are,

indeed, distinctions which are properly designated by these words—such as are wholly subordinate to the main idea, and serve to bring into view different aspects of the same fact. It would mislead no one were a man to say that he had just been attending a religious service, while he would perplex if not mislead his hearers were he to call it a moral service. Yet were the true principle of the act of worship under discussion, and were exactness of expression required, it would be proper to term such a service a moral one, inasmuch as to worship God according to His appointments is rendering Him His due, and puts the moral nature of man to proof. But there can be no just objection to such distinctions between things moral and religious, as are of the class to which this instance belongs.

The common separation, however, of moral duties as having respect to man, from those which are religious as referring solely to God, is not only unwarranted by any thing that has been revealed of our nature, but it does violence to the obvious constitution of that nature. It is as unphilosophical as it is theologically unsound. The act is clearly of the same kind when one renders to God what is directly due to God, as when one pays the money which he owes to his neighbor. It is as much a question

of morals—that is, a question to be determined in accordance with the one principle implanted in man by God when He made him a moral being—whether a man shall be true to the love and service of the one only God, as whether he shall be faithful to his marriage vow, or maintain that virtuous conduct which becomes one who is sensible of his obligations to society and to himself. Why, then, is it not as immoral to deny the claims of God as to refuse the payment of a just debt? Why is not the wandering of affections amid the promiscuous throng of objects that attract the mind on earth and draw it away from God, as immoral as what is ordinarily termed licentiousness? I know no ground for a distinction here that will agree with any just account of the source and constitution of our moral being. Whatever is in accordance with that being as it came from God, whatever promotes its welfare and testifies to its origin, is pre-eminently moral, and whatever is contrary is immoral. This arrangement of ideas and use of words corresponds with the facts. And so it is moral to keep faith with God as well as with man; and it is immoral to break our baptismal vows as well as to cheat in trade. The principle which is called into activity in all these cases is the same; the object only is changed. Now it is an

earthly object, and now an heavenly, now man, and now God, but as each relation comes into view the moral being greets it with an appropriate recognition.

A principle, so simple and intelligible, yet so comprehensive as this, appeals to the common sense even of men of the world. Admitting, as they do in most cases, that the Maker and Redeemer of the world is a personal God, all that I have here drawn out with perhaps over-minuteness, follows, of course. Its application to the world's best specimens of uprightness is so obvious as hardly to need illustration by a single instance. Yet it will not be amiss to glance at two or three.

We find Probus in his counting-room keeping up a credit and debit account with all the world, and sustaining by mere confidence in his integrity the weight of untold millions of money. And we thus apply our principle: "You, Probus, trust that you well deserve your name. You pay your debts. You defraud nobody. You may be safely relied on in all matters of business. This is not mere policy on your part: you aver that it is principle, and that you approve, from your heart, that element of character which has gained for you the name of an honest man. Do you, indeed, so heartily approve it? Then why is

God excluded from your calculations? Why are his claims not heeded? Why do you not render Him His due? He made you, and gave you all you have in bestowing on you the ability to get it. It is all a trust estate which you are managing for Him, the owner; who sets great store by it, hopes yet to rejoice in it, and expects to see it in the well-known order and completeness which He loves: but you are shaping it for your own ends; you are giving it the air that suits your tastes; however scrupulous towards your creditors and debtors, your family and dependents, so far as He is concerned you are squandering *His property*, O honest man, who admires, loves, and practises honesty *for its own sake!*"

We approach another—the gentleman, the man of honor—"shrinking from a stain as from a wound." "You would not be guilty of a lie. No one can say you ever broke your word; it is as good as your bond; all that you possess on earth shall be pledged for its sanctity. Why, then, do you not keep your baptismal vows? Why is not a resolution made to God as sacred as your word passed to your neighbor? Why, if truth is indeed your guiding principle, is not the response that conscience gives to the call of your Maker a pledge inviolable by you, since, though earth has never

a witness for it, in your heart you know it has been given?"

We seek in the sanctuary of his home and family the eminent instance of an unstained and irreproachable character, and probe his conscience with these words: "You are deemed the model of a pure man. No secret partner in shame could ever appear against you. Neither your eyes nor your thoughts wander amid the scenes of sensual vice. You cannot charge yourself even with more subtle defilements, such as dim the characters of men who are too refined for gross excesses. You are free from all suspicion of the sort, and you think that no possession on this earth is equal to that which he enjoys, who walks forth with an unsullied name, justified by the inward consciousness of rectitude. Are there no pleasures of this world, then, to which you have given the heart that should belong to God only? Is there no indulgence in intellectual vice? No alliance with sin in any guise? No taking bribes from the world, in the shape of social credit or temporal ease, to be tolerant of its vices, and to excuse its sins?"

We might pass in this manner through all ranks and conditions of society, putting questions, in reference to every virtue in the whole catalogue, that would bring out to view in

each case how far the moral principle extends. And why should not such questions be put? Why should men delude themselves with the idea that they really can abide to be measured by the standard of a true morality, when the world applies to them but a mere fragment of a standard, that cannot carry the computation of their morals further than a few fractional points?

God is a Person, infinitely more sacred than any fellow-man. He is the Object of emotions, precisely as men are, though far higher in degree. Our relations with Him imply mutual regards, the observance of covenants, the rendering of dues, the uncounted out-goings of affection, of thoughts that cannot be estimated. How is the *principle* of morality respected, if it be not active towards Him precisely as it would be if a fellow-man were concerned? I need but mention the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST to give still greater point to this question. How is the *principle* of our moral nature upheld and honored on this present earth, if there be no reference, in the determination of character, to the standard of that eternal world where alone that nature shall exhibit its perfection? Religion and morality are one in principle and one in fact—for he who is not a religious man is not really a moral man. I

put religion first, for it reminds us that our measure of morals must be adequate to Man's whole nature, according to the full intent of his creation, and including all his relations to God and all other beings, to time and eternity. That sort of morality which is self-complacent and at ease because of its scrupulous heed to the objects and occasions of this present life, not lifting its eyes to any wider range, is already beneath sentence: He that keepeth the whole law, yet offendeth in one point (the one determining point of all, the creature's duty to his Creator, the sinner's to his Saviour), "is guilty of all." And such a moral man, though perhaps he little dreams of it, is the very one on whom St. Paul's rebuke falls most heavily. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?"

I cannot pass from this portion of my subject without referring to the evils that proceed from this unhappy distinction which, as it is popularly viewed, puts far asunder two ideas that were made inseparably one, when God made man. They might be variously and minutely described, but they can be set forth sufficiently in three remarks.

1. The effect of drawing a false distinction between religion and morality, is to make some men undervalue morality. Religion is the one thing needful. If religious ideas, principles, and duties be a class by themselves, why need we be very anxious about matters beyond that class? Within its limits are the chief sources of hope, fear, and joy. It may be prudent, decorous, or politic, to give heed to moral virtues as distinguished from spiritual graces, but fervor and fidelity in religion will hide or make amends for great deficiencies in other respects, so that our only real anxiety is to be religious. The devout disciple will reach the gates of Heaven when your moral man will yet be entangled in the beggarly elements of earth.

2. There are other men who are affected in precisely the opposite way. They are induced to disparage religion. And, in this choice between religion and morality to which they are forced by the doctrine prevalent in a large portion of the religious world, Conscience is with them. They seem to have, and to a great extent they *do* have, her voice on their side. No voice can reach them from without that speaks so plainly and conclusively, as her whispered approval or disapproval, bringing instant conviction with it. They feel immov-

ably assured that, in making choice between right and wrong, they obey the first law of their being, and that to choose rightly in regard to any matter whatever, is no small thing. When, therefore, they hear other men, Doctors of Divinity or not, say of such conduct that it is "mere morality," and when they are called on to admit that it is distinct from and almost a hinderance to religion, they are most unhappily tempted to return for answer—keep to your Religion and we will keep to our Morality, and see which will come out best in the end.

3. Thus, a third result of drawing the distinction in question is, that multitudes of men are neither moral nor religious. They cannot be truly moral, for, not to say that their error causes them to neglect that Divine Grace, by which alone they can stand upright or rise when fallen, they have a most inadequate conception of what it is to be moral beings. A very small part of their obligations is included in their survey of duty. They do not see how the circuit of eternity and its relations sweeps round them. They think only of the measures of time. It is as if with a circle of an inch in diameter one were to attempt a measurement of the vast globe itself. On the other hand, they cannot be truly religious, for it is of the very essence of Religion to pay direct respect

to God in *all* things, great and small. And what sort of religious persons are ~~they~~, who are very observant of His will in prayers, or the use of His divine ordinances, and not a hundredth part so considerate of that same will in matters of truth and honesty, in the cultivation of traits of personal excellence?

These and kindred evils are all round us: morality undervalued; religion disparaged; they who lay little stress on "mere Morality," doing by no means the most credit to Religion; they who condemn "pharisaic Religion" being far from immaculate in morals. It is a state of society that comes, indeed, from the activity of the one Evil Principle that is in the world, but no one secondary cause is so effective towards it as the delusion that two separate things, having a sort of controversy together, are signified by Morality and Religion, when it is only one and the same thing differently viewed.

III.

SINFUL ACTS VARIOUS: PRINCIPLE OF EVIL ONE.

THE treatment which our first Parents found at the hands of their Maker, after their first disobedience in Eden, is a token to us that the punishment of sin is unavoidable. It is a most sure token, because the act of disobedience was, in itself, so small, and the punishment with which it was visited, so vast. Death temporal to Adam and Eve and all their descendants to the end of Time; death eternal in near possibility to them all and in awful reality to so many, is a huge result to be attributed to one act of disobedience, especially in a matter that does not prepare the mind for so grievous an issue of the transgression.

This very disproportion, then, between the effect and its apparent cause, is a sure token that the cause is much more potent than it seems to be. We convince ourselves of this, when we consider the part that Satan took in the Temptation of our First Parents, and inquire whence he came and what is the significancy of his appearing on the scene. This thought carries us back to a period of which we have

no record, but from which came down the struggle that had been going on—how long we do not know—of Sin and its abettors against Almighty God. That struggle, when Eve listened to the Tempter, reached the limits of recorded Time, and broke out amid the fair scenes of Paradise like the sudden and terrible plague-spot on a previously healthy body. Would such a fearful spot, showing itself suddenly in the person of some one man, have only the importance and meaning indicated by its effect upon that solitary individual? Why would other men instantly avoid him? Why would he be left in solitude, or visited only by the one or two whom mercy or duty bade take their lives in their hands, and tend upon him? Would it be because that one man alone had fallen ill, and was an isolated sufferer? No, truly, for it would hardly be the individual at all of whom men would think, but the token in him of the presence of the deadly pestilence. Whence or how did *it* come? how wide is the range it is likely to take? how long is it to last? how great is its power? how many are to be its victims? These questions would show the real meaning of the small dark spot upon that one man's brow, and account for the fright and sorrow of its appearing. In like manner, that eating once,

only once, of the forbidden fruit, that solitary act of disobedience, that act which, were it shut up in the bosom of the first pair and disconnected with all around it, might almost be termed trivial, was in truth the first plague-spot in this visible creation—the mark that the breath of the far-reaching Pestilence had mingled with the atmosphere of this new world, and that its ravages elsewhere and among other beings, were thenceforth and inevitably to have a counterpart on this earth, among the race of men. Adam and Eve were dealt with, not as a solitary pair, fresh and isolated in their strange symptoms of disorder, but in their connection with the already existing principle of evil, as showing the progress it was making, and as being the infected instruments of its yet wider spread.

It may be doubted whether the lesson is sufficiently pressed upon the attention of men, which is conveyed in this apparent disproportion between the first transgression and its punishment. For the most part their thoughts are fixed upon the act, rather than on the principle, of sin. They measure the evil by the magnitude of the act, and not by the malignity of the principle.

To murder, to steal, to bear false witness, are sinful actions. To spread the idle tales that

float through society about other people's character, to misspend one's time, to indulge one's appetite excessively, are also sinful actions. Whatever it may be within our bosoms, the impulse, passion, thought, or inclination that causes us to commit any one of these acts, is the principle of sin.

The actions are various, but the principle is ever one and the same. It goes by different names; in respect to murder, it may be hatred or anger; in respect to theft, it may be covetousness; in respect to false witness, it may be malice; a pettier kind of malice quickens the gossip's tongue; wilfulness prompts the abuse of opportunities, and greed or animal desire are answerable for sensual excess. But these are only various names of the one pestilential spirit which Satan first brought to earth, and with which he succeeded in infecting human nature. Diverse as are the forms in which it shows itself, they are all alike traceable to this one source, designated by the one word, Sin.

Now, in judging of Sin and its manifestations, we are apt to err from the same propensity to "walk by sight" that leads us to misjudge the character of pure and heavenly objects. We take the surface as a fair indication of what lies beneath it. The very diversity of the forms in which Sin shows itself

helps us to a false estimate of its character. How vast the difference between the murderer and the busybody! Why? what makes one man slay his neighbor, and another meddle mischievously in his affairs? To get an answer, we must turn our backs as well upon the uproar and horror that follow the act of violence, as upon the small annoyances and petty wrangling that mark the talebearer's track, and along one or another of the rapidly converging paths find our way in the heart and secret spirit of the man. There we look into the one dark, deep spring of all man's evil actions, which communicates through yet more interior and untraceable channels, with the infernal heats that cause its ever-restless overflow. The only One who could ever tell us all the truth about it, has said that here the least as well as the greatest of man's evil deeds had their common source. He gave a list of what proceeded out of the heart; it began with murders, and ended with foolish talking. The difference, then, between our sinful actions is only that which is seen in two streams that flow from the same fountain, the one of which meets sharp descents and precipices in its course, and, acquiring vehemence as it goes, sweeps every thing before it; the other finds a more level way, stagnates in unwholesome pools, trickles into

unsuspected places, and loads the air with its slow, heavy, silent poison.

This is the only difference, it will be observed, that exists in such actions considered in reference to their principle. They exhibit the principle in a different manner, just as there is a difference in the way in which a feather floating on the breeze, and great limbs of trees borne violently along, testify to the motion of the air. That one principle accounts for the tokens both of the gentle breeze and of the furious gale, and the tokens of these respectively stand for one and the same principle. In like manner, the difference in evil actions, great as it appears to be, in fact tells us but this one thing—that the evil principle which is spread throughout the world, and which, while it seeks to exert its force everywhere to the utmost, does not omit the least opportunity, is ever showing itself in appropriate deeds: great and heinous deeds, if possible; of a milder sort, if that be all for which the occasion serves.

I repeat it, therefore, that our sinful actions, considered in reference to their principle, signify but one and the same fearful thing—that one, entire, indivisible, intolerable evil, SIN. There is not one disorder, weak in itself and mild in its forms, to which slight neglects of

duty, and small untruths, and the scarce ever-counted throng of lesser faults are to be referred; and another great disorder, distinct from this and fatal in its power, which makes men open violators of divine and human law. There is but one disturbing influence; one subtle poison that in all frames and under every form, does as much mischief as it can, and means to work out, if possible, in every case, through a longer or a shorter process, its sole proper result of—death.

In all this it has not been said that our sinful actions are alike, in their effects upon society, or in their consequences to ourselves. These are altogether other points than those to which the foregoing remarks are directed. It is almost needless to say that, in these respects, what we do amiss may vary greatly in importance. Regarded in this light, the murderer's deed is widely separated from a slight act of dishonesty, or from merely private sins of wilfulness. The interests of other men are differently affected in such cases, and in the former, the public hue and cry, the general agitation, the formal proceedings of justice, mark out the magnitude of the evil deed. As it concerns the offender himself, he has given a fearful sign of the activity of the evil principle, and of the extent of its power in his own bosom.

Rightly therefore is his crime judged to be enormous, whether as regards the public or himself.

But when the sinner hears and obeys the call to repentance, and begins deliberately to search out his own heart and probe the depths of its evil, there is something to be done besides counting up the number of separate offences, and ranging them in classes according to their apparent grievousness. In doing this he rates them, perhaps, as they stand in the commonly received scale of actions, and it may be that in the main he approaches to a just discrimination. But there is a consideration that includes them all to be duly entertained, if his repentance is to be genuine and his renunciation of sin thorough. What makes all or any one of these actions grievous? What finally determines their character as intrinsically bad? Such a question passes through the effect of wrong-doing upon society at large, and goes deeper than any outward result of it. It does not touch upon the degree in which the sinner has exhibited himself to be under the dominion of sin. It relates solely to the nature of sin itself. What is it? What is he to think of it? How is he to estimate it? There is much to be settled in regard to this point. The effect of his actions upon the community in which he lives may be very mis-

chievous indeed, and he may be justly held responsible for producing the mischief, since he could have foreseen and avoided it. Yet the ill results may perhaps be attributed to the peculiar and exaggerated notions of other men, so that when it comes to self-examination, to his accusing or excusing himself in his own conscience, he may hold himself to blame indeed for wounding their prejudices, and still not deem his act to be so very bad. Again; as a matter of purely personal concern, when he considers his conduct fairly, it may reveal to him the excessive activity of a certain principle, which excess is to be deplored and, if possible, repressed. But his sensibility in the matter will depend very much on what the principle is: whether in itself an utter and intolerable evil, or chiefly lamentable in its excesses. Now the man who would be really penitent for his sins must determine for himself this matter. He must have no doubt as to what sin is, in itself, quite apart from its manifestations. He must be in no confusion of ideas respecting sin as in its own nature a deadly evil, and the results of sin as working harm on earth, or as likely to reach in his own character some appalling shape. If he understands himself and the subject with which he has to deal, he will allow himself no peace

while any movement of the hateful enemy of God can be detected. He will rise in vigor, and be more thoroughly determined, and feel more deeply the significance of the struggle, as he reduces it to the minor details of repressing a power which has been driven from its main position. Even should he seem to have put Satan effectually under him, yet, if but the faintest pulsation of life be perceptible as with firm foot he presses down his foe, a thrill of mingled apprehension and resolve darts through him, reminding him that the monster though fallen is all alive, and that any sign of life in such a Being is terrible.

In thoughts like these we reach the reason why, in considering ourselves as sinners, it is of so much moment to discern the real malignity of that principle of sin which, by small as truly as by great tokens, is shown to be working in us. The existence and activity of that malignant principle, is the great evil with which Almighty God is dealing. Our subjection to it puts us, so far as we are subject, among the promoters of that evil. The first requisite to our escape from its power, is to learn from that Divine Redeemer, through whom alone we can escape, by the revelations of His Word and the inspirations of His grace, how utterly to be abhorred is the spirit which prompts to

any sin however small, and which, in all its forms, is but the one sole spirit of evil.

When we reflect upon our condition in the sight of God, this is the first point that demands distinct and adequate consideration. It is the end towards which all penitence tends. Such measures of repentance should be taken, as will instruct us in the immeasurable greatness of the evil to which we have hitherto consented.

There is much to be done, then, before we rightly understand the plague of our own hearts. What have we done hitherto? We have counted our sins, it may be, one by one. At least, we have run rapidly over the collected multitude of them, gaining a sad impression of their number and variety, and then have singled out one and another, as far as memory served to bring back the deeds of the past, in groups or separately. "How wrong this was! How exceeding sinful was that act! How could I have been guilty of such follies! How palpable my error now appears! How vainly should I attempt to screen my fault! But I hope I may be pardoned. O God, forgive me! I resolve by Thy Grace never to commit such sins again. I will watch over my besetting sins. I will strive against all sin whatever; only let the past be blotted out, and hence-

forth save me from such evil memories, such guilty consciousness!" This, in brief sketch, has been the repentance it may be of some one who reads this page: a sincere repentance, we may hope, and efficacious to bring and keep him within reach of the sacred and purifying Fountain of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST. I would not question its genuineness, or take any other view of it than such as may suggest the means of increasing its fervor, of rendering it more thorough, and of causing it to result in a yet more effectual cleansing of the soul from sin. On a careful review of it, it may appear that it was mainly occupied with confessions of and sorrow for particular acts of sin, selected because of their conspicuous enormity, or for some other special reason. These palpable transgressions of the law of duty have afforded the matter for penitential sorrow. The present impression on the penitent's mind is of the wrong of having done such things, or of having left other things undone, and of his purpose to be heedful in these respects hereafter. He is sensible of having gauged his repentance by the standard which men ordinarily apply to actions, in judging of their moral value, and thus his consciousness of wrong and the emotion consequent thereon, were proportioned to the offensiveness of the acts as affecting other

men, or his own standing in society. Did he ever openly break one or more of the Ten Commandments? With what horror does he now regard that deed! Did he ever utterly throw off the restraints of Religion? It was most miserable folly. Has he been, not reckless but only neglectful of his religious obligations? Under what unhappy delusion was he laboring! Has he been somewhat too careless of appearances, or too free in speech, or unrestrained in temper, or in fault in some such way? It was bad, indeed—at least, it ought to have been better, but he will try for the future to correct that fault. And so the list dwindles down, and the sense of sin subsides with it, till both together taper off into those fine points of every-day demeanor in common matters, concerning which so few men stop to think whether there be, indeed, a right and a wrong. If this outline fits at all the course through which the mind of such a penitent as I have supposed has gone, he will surely see the need of reviewing it and of making up its deficiencies. They will be detected by the help of one simple clue: this truth, that, of our repentance, SIN is the object, and that acts of sin are significant only as showing sin's presence and power. If the greater acts are to be noted, as showing sin's greater power, it is

well: but if there is to be a counterpart to this, and lesser acts are to be made less of, as though in them sin parted with some portion of its hatefulness, then, truly, our very repentance needs to be repented of. It can have substance only in a thorough effort to ascertain the evil in our hearts in all possible indications of it, and when the evil is so found, though it be but in some vain imagination or unworthy desire, to see therein not a small thing, but SIN, the vast, fearful, hateful principle that rears its front in Heaven and defies Almighty God, while it lurks in the corners of our poor souls, and distresses us with apprehensions of sharing its inevitable fate. So to see it, and to comprehend it, and to feel its intrinsic malignity, and to produce a hatred of it, and a perpetual uneasiness under its inflictions, is the work of a true repentance.

A busy man is he in his religion whose one idea is that he has a great many separate sins to repent of and forsake, a great many duties to perform, a great many virtues and graces to acquire. He is a man of energy and action. Time is short, and he will make the best use of it he can. He, therefore, fastens his eye on a few conspicuous things that seem the most important amid the number of objects before him. He gets an intense horror of the partic-

ular kind of offences to which he has been most subject, and is severely just in his self-condemnation. He carries off the round of his prominent and obvious duties with a swing that makes an impression—on his work, on himself, on the world. He becomes eminent for certain qualities that are of great practical value. On all these points he is reliable. He is thoroughly in earnest. What he is, he is by the grace of God. But how it mars a character which in many points is so worthy of respect, that those little faults—as they are mildly termed—hang round it! how out of keeping—and more than that, for it sometimes gives a sudden shock to the beholder—that irreverence, or that inexactness as to truth in minor things, that irritability, that self-indulgence, or some similar trait which, though he be so active a Christian, seems a settled feature of his character! Why is it? He has not found time to amend these faults! He has been looking at other faults which he supposed to be greater. He has been wholly occupied with the *forms* which Evil takes; their relative magnitude he has carefully estimated, and in adapting himself to meet the most formidable, he has spent all his time and strength. He has never set before his eyes the simple, naked malignity of sin itself, and is by no means sensitive to its

approach unless it challenges attention in bold displays. He has yet to learn deep lessons of the exceeding sinfulness of sin : the intolerableness of the evil principle which is whole and entire in its least, as well as greatest exhibition.

Of this, which he has not yet learned, another man is fully conscious. He sees that which he must abhor, resist, and be intolerant of, in the invisible and subtle principle that is within and around him. How collected in spirit, how calm in manner, how quiet in his modes of procedure is such a one ! Must he rush instantly to *that* quarter of the field ? Must he, on shortest notice, bring up all the forces of his soul to *this* particular point ? Must he, in a given time, accomplish just so much ? Why should he be so excited, feverish, and breathless ? There may be occasions for the display of such a spirit in a special season of the Church, or great emergency of life, when it will be evident enough that he can mount up to blood-heat, but it is not and cannot be his every-day condition. He expects and wishes every day to encounter Sin itself as a principle, subtle and insinuating as the air he breathes, and so he walks forth for the most part quietly upon his ordinary path, sure of soon meeting his enemy. It may be in a thought, or in some habit of his daily life, or in some trials of faith,

or in grievous assaults upon his integrity. But the greatest of these does not surprise nor the least escape him, for he measures the occasion, whatever it may be, not by its outward show but by the deadliness and hatefulness of that which it indicates. He therefore thinks that as much is done, when he subdues his soul to patience under a common temptation to anger, as when he gains what other men deem a signal triumph in some special scene of trial.

What manner of persons ought we to be if all that has been said of this present Life and our relations to the eternal world, and of the malignity of sin, be only sober truth and most unquestionable reality? How should one who truly discerns these things behave himself amid the hourly circumstances of this world? What should be the character of his whole course on earth?

Three ideas which he has constantly in mind, three principles in accordance with which he governs his conduct, show us where to place and what to make of him.

1. His life here is but a span, and he will treat it so: he will not take from it his measures of delight or duty.

2. Above, before, around him is Eternity, and he expects, at any moment, to walk forth in its light and its unlimited vastness, when

Time dissolves about him, as some slight, fragile structure that had shut him in might fall in pieces, and leave him to step unharmed out of its ruins.

3. As he is now situated, evil is actively working everywhere, but not like those pent-up fires of the earth, which, when they rush forth from the volcano's mouth with concentrated fury, withdraw their force from other regions, and afford relief to trembling nature. The evil which he sees is as keenly active in its subtlest forms as in its grossest outbreaks, and in both at the same moment—so that he never allows himself to forget the presence of sin in the world and in his own bosom; he never does the slightest thing, so far as he can have the needful vigilance, that will seem to favor sin as it works in the world around him, or to tolerate it in himself.

With these three things firmly fixed in mind and thoroughly apprehended, can there be much difficulty in ascertaining where the Christian will be found, under any of the ordinary conditions of this life? Granting that such ideas be really entertained, ought such a person to find himself in doubt as to where the path of duty and of safety runs? That any one of us ever doubts, is a token that we have not received these truths as the infallible veri-

ties they really are. We have not received them as our Saviour has disclosed them to us, into honest hearts, that mean to deal fairly by them, allow them their full force, and follow them whithersoever they may lead us. Does a question rise concerning the spirit with which we shall address ourselves to the various and ordinary duties of our several stations? Short toil of a brief day! the light of Heaven is soon to fall upon it; and oh! what speechless confusion, to be caught slothful in the very least task that could possibly be intrusted to us! Is it a question of the received laws and principles of worldly policy, and of the degree in which we shall engage with other men in the pursuit of common objects? We must approve ourselves, not as the creatures of a day, in the judgment of our fellow-mortals, but as preparing to pass, at an instant's warning, with our principles, aims, and habits of thought and conduct, into a world where all is pure, high, and sublime; where God and eternity shall be the standard of proof. Is the amount of temporal possessions of whatever sort, wealth, fame, power, or any other good or gain of earth, brought into question? One point is sure: the amount shall be fairly proportioned to the scene of its possession: the desire for it shall be strictly gauged, by the narrowness of

the limits wherein it is to be possessed. Is the question one that merely concerns pleasure and amusements—what they shall be? how far we shall indulge in them? Let the power contained in the ideas of Time, and Eternity, and Sin, overshadow it, and how will it cease to be a question! In their presence there can be no labored discussion of such points, and we shall feel that, as to pleasures on the earth, if we go not after them, we shall receive them in such shapes as Providence sends them to our doors, clearly designating them, by their unobtrusiveness and innocent connections, to be fit inmates of a household where their only place is a subordinate one. Even of these He may send but a few! Even of the few, He may let some approach to try whether our door can ever be shut against them, or whether it flies not open instantly and widely to the charming form and modest mien of innocent Pleasure, as it never does to Duty with her grave attire and thoughtful countenance. Be, then, the question what it may, that is referred to such ideas and principles of action as are found in the subjects which I have been discussing, it is hardly conceivable that we should wait long for an answer, or receive it in a doubtful or unavailable shape. It cannot be. Let the mind be subject to the truth that man

is a being for eternity and not for time ; that life is short, and eternity long, and this world a scene of brief but deep disorder ; and that, when the Eye sees, the Ear hears, the Tongue tastes, the Hand touches, and the Heart desires, that subtlest of elements, the sin which pervades the world can, and perhaps does, make the act its own, and surely is on the watch to do so—let this thought fill the mind, this truth be dominant over the will, and the man so furnished and fortified will never lack a theoretical or practical solution of any such difficulty as I have named, that may be referred to his decision.

If the spirit of religion were really quickened into new life among us, it would put such ideas with power into our souls. It would give to them, and other ideas like them, the control of our being. They would teach us to be self-restrained, and to contract our desires so far as this earth draws them forth, and to simplify our worldly plans, if not to throw all such plans aside. We should learn to substitute here, and at once, expectations and wishes that reach forward to the next world, in place of those that have their only substance in some inviting form of pleasure or advantage as this earth can dress it out. There would, assuredly, be things to part with, or to endure, some

course of duty to be patiently fulfilled with small prospect of immediate encouragement or reward, some trial to be meekly borne, some annoyances to be taken with a calm exterior and a placid spirit, some avenue of life opening into increasing obstacles and fading hopes, yet to be resolutely entered, some form of the conflict of sin in one's own bosom—something, in fine, which a man would never dream of facing were he not convinced of these truths about life's brevity and deficiencies, and sin's malignity; and with which he cannot wisely and religiously deal till he has learned the lesson Lent was meant to teach, of voluntary self-denial—that lesson which shows its peaceful result, when a man can say over things that would once have raised his very soul in tumult—"Well, let them go! Sin has spoiled them; they are of the earth, earthy; whatever they be, I care not now to weigh them. My life is yet to come. Heaven and Eternity will make amends for all!"

When we gain this spirit we shall understand our Saviour's words: "He that loseth his life, shall save it." We shall then be made conformable, in our own life and character, to that blessed Saviour's Cross and Passion. We and that Cross, "which is the measure of the world," shall be then of one piece; concordant parts

of one system, which shows itself on earth in forms of trial, and which shall appear in Heaven in the substance and brightness of eternal joy.

O sinful man! not yet fully resolved to treat your own case vigorously by the modes of penitence prescribed in the Gospel, what is there possible for you to do but this, except miserably to die! It is not a freak of the imagination that your mortal life is brief, disturbed, and untrustworthy. It is no fanciful idea that Sin, full of deadly power, pervades the world, and lodges in your own breast. If you are to escape at all, these inexorable facts determine the manner and direction of your escape. You cannot change the proportions of this life and the next. You cannot alter the relations of your own soul to other created beings, and to the Creator. More than all—you cannot make the world a safer place than it is, and give yourself a freer range amid its goods and pleasures. Dispute not how innocent in itself this pleasure is! how harmless or how healthful that scene of happiness! *You* are the diseased being; the taint of death is borne for you upon the outer air. Be the atmosphere ever so healthful and bracing to the well man, there are those whose vitiated systems would catch the seeds of death in the softest breath

of summer. And we are all sin-tainted, nor need we ascertain precisely how far the infection has spread through the whole creation—enough, there is not a spot on earth that is wholly free. Submit to restraint, then; make discipline your life-long portion here, that you may be strong and free for the range of an eternal existence.

And, O Christian! weak in faith, believing that what your Saviour has purchased by His agony and death is ample to recompense you for present losses, yet seeing the loss so clearly and feeling it so deeply, as constantly to be wishing and striving to render it as little as possible—take courage; be magnanimous; have a large heart for present sacrifices. Years of feasting are before you. The banquets of heavenly delights are to succeed each other forever; why not cheerfully give up this one repast of earth? How little is it, in itself, to lose! How infinitely little, in comparison with what follows it!

Thus we sum up all these thoughts in this their practical result. The world is too brief, and worth too little, our true lives too long and precious, and sin an evil too threatening and vast, to admit of any temporizing. Better, surely, to lose literally every thing here than run any risk about the hereafter. And the

token of this is ever full in view, in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, "who, for the joy set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God."

I V.

LENT INTERRUPTS WORLDLY HAPPINESS.

TAKING some things for granted, this present earth and this mortal life are, truly, very pleasant. The world abounds with most agreeable objects. Incidents that are full of interest succeed each other at sufficient intervals to keep up a pleasurable excitement. One would not wish the days to be an hour shorter. There is just time enough to look after one's plans, and attend to needful matters, to indulge one's self, at intervals, according to one's tastes, to mix business, relaxation, and amusement together in a healthful and appetizing compound. At the moment when further activity would be wearisome, sleep seals the willing senses in a delicious calm, while it softly shifts the scenes and prepares the incidents for another welcome day of renewed consciousness.

How delightful all this is!—taking some things for granted. They are not unimportant things, it is true, but still they are so common that it is not very unreasonable to count upon them. Health, for instance, is an absolute essential to this enjoyment of life—but after

all deductions on the score of occasional ailments, most of us have a fair share of health. We must have, moreover, enough of this world's goods, either in hand, or attainable by moderate exertion, to set us above daily want—but this is the ordinary lot of men, and we may not unreasonably reckon on it for our portion. There must also be a place which we can call our home, the centre of our personal interests and affections—but there are very few of us who do not have such a home. Then, too, as health and competence and home would avail little without a mind at ease to enjoy them, we must be free from any great anxieties, whether of a public or a private nature: but even this freedom, though we cannot speak of it quite so confidently, yet in the public portion of it certainly is the privilege of the great majority of men, and in the private, is not usually narrowed down to limits within which the heart and mind cannot act except on the one subject, and in the one direction. No! thank God! we may add this good thing, also, to our portion in this lifetime—so that, assuring ourselves of the reasonable prospect of health, and competence, and a home, and a mind at ease, we cannot help feeling that the earth is a pleasant place, and life itself a pleasure. It is all the more so because we are so

moderate in our wishes, so reasonable in our ideas. We know that there must be a limit to our possessions, both as to their extent and their duration—and this reminds us that we have forgotten to name another thing that must be taken for granted in estimating the pleasures of our existence here. It is, our religion, our holy religion! How could we, even for a moment, omit to mention that, which is the very crown and finish of our satisfaction with the lot that is assigned to us, since from that proceeds our peace of conscience, our sense of security in all the main points both of the Present and the Future. In a world so full of wickedness, in which we are never without examples of the awful consequences of casting away moral and religious restraints—how pleasant it is to feel one's self on the safe side! and to measure the vast distance which separates our orderly conduct from the horrible vices that degrade the ignorant or the lawless of mankind! We are sensible, moreover, of the positive gratifications which religion imparts. How soothing are those words—God's mercy, and redeeming Love, and all-sufficient Grace! How acceptable the Sunday services, and the occasional week-day hour in church! how satisfactory to hear and to assent to the instructions of the

Word of God both read and preached! What a relief—not the less genuine because so often insensible at the moment—to complete these recurring acts of public and private homage to our Maker! Oh! life without religion would be another thing, indeed, than what we find it to be. Life, with some dark, gloomy superstition, would be no better than with no religion at all. But life under the influence of this Gospel of Love and Peace—this Religion of beneficence and cheerfulness—what a precious and blessed thing it is! How strange that every one who loves life and would fain see good days, does not understand that the only effectual way to seek for peace is through the comforts and consolations of the Christian Church.

There is one thing, however, that somewhat impedes the smooth rotation of our years, as we have thus happily regulated them. As we are frankly communing with our own hearts, we may as well confess it. To be perfectly honest then with ourselves—and why should we not be—we need not publish it to the world; perhaps, in time, we shall feel differently—but at present we must own that we do not exactly comprehend, we do not altogether like, this LENT that comes round annually in the very midst of our business, in the very height of our pleasures. We have no fancy

for the special and distinctive ideas which seem to be connected with it. Clearly, it is a break in the tenor of our lives, as they are constituted. If we heartily consent to it, we do not feel sure that we shall be able to pick up again the broken threads of our ideas and habits, and neatly and securely reunite them, and go smoothly on to weave the web of earthly happiness. Of course, that is our chosen and proper portion: earthly happiness; happiness on earth; happiness in forms of earth; happiness in the spirit that pervades and distinguishes the refined society we move in; happiness that, in itself and on the earth, and in this mortal life, is measurably complete, and on which, when leaving it at the end of life, we shall be allowed to cast one longing, lingering look, before we change it for that, which is substantially of another sort, the eternal happiness of Heaven. But, most surely, with this fabric of our life, so delicately constructed to make the most of space and situation, to conceal unsightly objects, to suggest the ideas of lightness, ease, and cheerfulness, it is impossible to work in those huge and sombre masses which Lent presents as the materials of our labor, quarrying them out of the depth of memory and of consciousness, and dragging to the light of day what was only meant to be

covered in by the kindly soil which produces the verdure and fruitage of our ordinary existence. Forty days of abstinence from pleasant meats, and things more pleasant than any food, however delicate and rare! Forty days spent in deepening the impression that we are sinners! Forty days when the scrutiny of what we have done amiss, is to work steadily on to the end of making us feel in our inmost soul that our indelible is utter, and that we are in truth but vile earth and miserable sinners! Forty days, when imagination will learn to people the invisible air around us with those powers of mischief and principalities of evil that summon us to a struggle for life, if we submit not unresistingly unto certain and eternal death! Forty days, when the doom of sinners confronts us! when we apply ourselves so closely to estimate the price which it cost to redeem our souls that, at last, the very sound of the money in our purses as we spend it as heretofore upon ourselves, has the ring of the thirty pieces of silver! Forty days in the wilderness of temptation, in the garden of agony, on the hill of shame! Six long weeks during which the cloud of the Saviour's Passion rises slowly over us, and the darkness creeps around that grows black as Egypt, and still and oppressive as death, till it is rent by the awful

cry, "My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me!" Forty of such days is Lent, in its own proper nature! This it is to keep the season honestly and heartily! Something besides this there is, perhaps—but this much, at least, we see of Lent at the outset. And we have no sympathies ready for such a season. Our hearts are not prepared to go along with such a course of discipline. There is no place provided in our system of life for the effects of such discipline. There is something forced, unnatural and exaggerated, as it seems to us, in devotional exercises so conducted. Our religion is of another type. We could dispense with observances which, it seems, the Church makes a prominent part of her system. How shall we meet this difficulty without, on the one hand, being openly neglectful of her; on the other, doing violence to our own feelings?

In what I have thus written the reader will not recognize my own sentiments, nor, it is to be hoped, altogether a faithful reflection of his own spirit. But, nevertheless, there are not a few persons who are found by the season of Lent somewhat in this condition of mind. If not all of these thoughts, or in this connected way, at least some of them are not unlikely to occur. Sentences like these would assuredly be overheard, could we be present when some

of those who participate in the Church's privileges, commune frankly with themselves on this subject. And out of the Church, in the world around us, stronger and harsher language would testify how unintelligible to such observers is the principle embodied in this sacred season; how repugnant to their ideas and tastes are its usages. But, however men may feel about it, in the Church or out of the Church—the stars fulfil their courses, the sun performs his annual journey, the moon duly reflects her light at the vernal equinox, and so surely as her beams fall on the earth they renew the Paschal solemnities, which the Religion of eighteen centuries has taught the Faithful to preface with penitential discipline, with a period of abstinence, self-humiliation, and special devotion. We who live beneath this system are answerable for a willing and intelligent submission to its power. Even they who do not comprehend it or recognize its ancient and apostolic sanction, often feel its influence more or less perceptibly in the tenor of their daily lives. Throughout society, in this christian land, extends, in some degree, the influence of Lent. The season surely comes alike to the willing and the unwilling, for the purpose of accomplishing its work in the world, in the Church, in each separate soul.

How grievous is the evil, then, if there be many ignorant who should be enlightened concerning it! if there be many reluctant, who should be willing! if there be many who desire to get easily over it, without entering into its distinctive work! if there be many in the Church who draw back at its approach, because they see how thoroughly it breaks in upon their accustomed ways and thoughts, and breaks up their earthly ease! If we detect any such influence working within our reach, insinuating doubt or reluctance into our own minds, or those with whom we come in near contact, to counteract it is the foremost duty of the season. Let a good beginning be made by laying our own heart bare, and ascertaining precisely what is required in order to keep Lent truly; how those ideas that strictly belong to the season, and out of which it springs, harmonize with our religious convictions; how we are disposed to take the interruption to the serenity of a spirit at ease amid the occupations and enjoyments of earth, which Lent undoubtedly is, if its true intent be heeded.

The number of persons who regard Lent in the light above described, and who are so affected by it, may be much more numerous than would at first be supposed. Such thoughts as I have attributed to them are not likely to

be so carefully drawn out even by those who entertain them, and, at any rate, are not likely to be proclaimed to the world. I have referred to their number, and have sketched their state of mind, to serve as a foil to the wiser and better thoughts with which the season may be regarded, to remind the reader that to keep a Lent faithfully is not to reflect the sentiments of other people on the subject, nor to follow the ways of the greater number, but to consider and determine for himself what the demands of the season are on him personally; how it finds and how it will be likely to leave him; and to count the cost of observing it. Let him take the picture which I have drawn of a state of mind that is moderately religious, but into which no one element that characterizes the present season enters largely or actively. Let him ascertain the points of difference between it and the portraiture of a devout and christian spirit, according to the Church's type, and assure himself of the reason why so great a difference exists. I offer these pages to him, hoping that he will find them serviceable in the determination of these points, and in disposing him to surrender himself, in this matter, to the prudent and tender counsel which CHRIST has taught His Church to give.

Restrictions upon all forms of pleasure: less of food; less of sleep; less of variety in each day's incidents; a more exact measurement of time and strength, and a closer watch on the needs which nature has of support and relaxation; prayers more frequent and prolonged; a faithful scrutiny into the disagreeable parts of our own lives and character; less toleration for self-excuses, and a greater promptitude to engage in uninviting tasks; a perpetual remembrance of the reason why such a life should be led, viz., our inability to trust ourselves, through our moral degradation and spiritual weakness; an ever-increasing consciousness that employments and thoughts like these cannot be limited to a six weeks in each year, but must henceforth color our whole lives, and be the substitute for much on which our thoughts and time, it may be, have hitherto been freely spent; and, as the season goes on, a deepening sense of fellowship with the Crucified; an increasing willingness to put the estimate of the Cross upon this world; a decrease of our liking for this earth, with the rising of an earnest desire to quit earth for Heaven, if such a blessed thing may be for us poor sinners;—in these, and in many other similar things of which these remind us, we find the characteristics of a Lent truly observed. Undoubtedly such a

Lent is a break in the even tenor of a mere worldly life. Neither does it agree with the admission of Religion into our plan of life in measured portions, only to contribute to present peace of mind, and to the ease of an earthly existence. It is a marked state of being—with traits too strong to agree with any thing unlike itself; with its own separate and peculiar duties; its own satisfactions; its own supports; its own rewards. Lent but condenses the discipline of Life, the Easter joy of which comes once, and forever. It is to be taken only as the specimen of our mortal life, in which the strong points are for a short time brought together, that they may make a strong impression. On looking at the Epistle for the first Sunday in Lent, we see what is the lot of the servant of CHRIST who thoroughly surrenders himself to his Master's service—a lot so different from that which the world counts happy. It begins with what the world counts misery: "afflictions," "necessities," "distresses," "strifes," "imprisonments," "tumults," "labors," "watchings," "fastings." It passes on, however, through this Lenten discipline into another set of ideas which even the world must admire, though it will not pay the cost of realizing them: "pureness," "knowledge," "kindness," "love unfeigned," "the word of

truth," "righteousness on the right hand and on the left." It ends in that condition, which, in the estimate of those who have not learned its secret, is unintelligible mystery, and the mere madness of overwrought enthusiasm, but wherein, to the Saint of God, the extremity of trial becomes the very occasion of triumphant joy, so that he cheerfully accepts the condition which, if God so permits, the world contemptuously or bitterly assigns to him: as dying, and behold! he lives; as chastened, but not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Such is Lent, its progress and results. Or rather, such is Life, with its progress and results, formed under a religion, of which the type is this season of self-restraint, humility, and devotion. The wisdom and experience of ages may be implicitly believed, when they tell us that the means of prosecuting such a life which are offered by the Church, are the best, the only means. The HOLY SPIRIT may assuredly be relied on to furnish the strength that will carry us through; God, our Saviour, may be trusted for the end to which He will bring us.

V.

LENT AIMS AT REVIVAL.

THERE is no mark of man's imperfection more indisputable, for there is none more common, than his liability to become insensible to familiar truths, callous to motives that are constantly urged upon him, and inert in the performance of every-day duties. It matters little as regards the exhibition of his weakness, what the truths, motives, and duties may be. It will show itself whenever the subject that seeks to occupy him does not supply its own special stimulant. There is, indeed, no likelihood of his flagging or getting tired of his object, when engaged in the pursuit of gain. Whatever comes into his hands in the shape of worldly goods, though it be for the thousandth time, or in overwhelming abundance, communicates a new sensation of delight, a fresh impulse on the road to wealth. The satisfaction of his natural desires and appetites sustains itself, as the controlling principle of his life, so long as life lasts. He never tires

of the ministrations of pleasure, till health fails him, or age enfeebles his senses; and even then, if a flash of its former light ever appears in the eye of the worn-out sensualist, it is when art concentrates the flavors of his former delights, and promises him once more the taste of their pungency and freshness. But when the special excitements of wealth or pleasure, for the multitude, and of power, fame, or knowledge for the few, do not come in, our natural tendency to indifference and inaction shows itself in conspicuous and undeniable ways. No movement was ever set on foot with the expectation of its continuance, no society was ever formed with a view to permanent life and action, that had not, sooner or later, to meet the difficulty arising from the decay of the spirit which marked the outset. The higher the pitch to which that spirit was raised and the greater the numbers of those who shared in it, the more signal if not the surer was the subsiding of zeal and the falling off of numbers. The part of practical wisdom which the world most values, is to know where to find, and how to apply, those excitements which revive the vigor of human institutions, which make the old names sound new in the public ears, and rekindle in the bosoms of men the feelings that either blazed so fiercely at first

as soon to burn out, or that went gradually smouldering down amid their own ashes.

Thus it is with human nature in respect to objects of mere earthly interest. It often needs to be sustained and revived in the pursuit of them. It lacks in itself the principle of perseverance. It ceases to regard them as attractive in the degree required to overcome its own inherent sluggishness. It is not then to be expected that this trait of our nature will disappear, when the ends to be attained are raised so much above the level of this world as those which are set before us by the the Gospel. As the difficulties in the way of action increase, as results and the satisfaction to be found in them are put further off in the future, as the motives and principles of conduct are drawn from sources less obvious to sight, nature's need increases of aid from without. Her pathway must be cleared and fenced in, and made as plain as possible. In its rugged parts some special helps and encouragements must be provided. Nor is she fairly or wisely dealt with, if account be not made beforehand of the certainty that, without reference to extraordinary obstacles in her way, she will droop and fall at any point, merely because the path runs on, and on, and on before her—lost in what seems to her the interminable dis-

tance. Under this sort of trial, man's natural need becomes twice his need. Support must be afforded him, suitable to the demand made by his mental and moral constitution. Something proper to stimulate his powers must be administered. The life of hope, and faith, and zeal within him must be quickened anew.

The design of meeting this want of our nature is seen in the whole course of the Church's year: it becomes most manifest at the annual time of Lent. This is, in every respect, the most marked period of the year. It is by far the longest, for it begins in fact with the third Sunday before Lent, nor does it come to any natural pause till, on the eighth day of the Resurrection, we conclude the great solemnities of Easter. During ten weeks a succession is uninterruptedly sustained of thoughts and emotions, than which none can be imagined more powerful to impress the mind of mortal man, or stir the very depths of his nature. The language of St. Paul on Septuagesima Sunday, lays out before the mind the race for the prize and the strife for the mastery. The words of the Prophet on the first day of Lent, sound as though the silver tubes of God's ancient Priests, to which he gave commission so to sound, had uttered them—"Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly." The

scene is pictured forth of the gathered congregation prostrate in the Temple, while the priests between the porch and the altar offer with tears their deprecation of the punishment their sins deserve. Our Blessed Lord's Temptation in the wilderness is presented to our view at the outset of the season, and we thence naturally look onward to the events of His Passion, Death, and Burial, and of His Resurrection. All this combination of the holiest ideas is submitted to our close inspection, as containing in every part lessons of almost unfathomable meaning, and uttering in every part rebukes, warnings, exhortations, entreaties, precisely such as conscience tells each one of us he needs. It is specially observable in how many ways the character of the season is brought out, by its calls to penitence, its opportunities of devotion, its additional instructions and ministrations in the Church, its means of self-discipline and restraint. Account must be had, also, of the vast increase of power over the mind and heart, which is given to the ideas, truths, facts, and observances that characterize the entire season, by the common sympathy in regard to them that spreads throughout the Church; by the consciousness we have that so many other minds are occupied with the same thoughts; by coming in actual contact, in the public con-

gregations, with those who share in the same feelings, and recognize the same objects of devout consideration. When all these things are duly noted, we cannot fail to discern the end to which the Providence of God has directed this portion of the Christian Year. It is designed to stop the members of the Church, and any others who may come within her influence, midway in their various courses of folly or of wrong-doing. It is designed to throw a sudden and strong light upon certain truths of Revelation, and certain facts which are recorded in the Sacred History, that the forgetful and the negligent may be made conscious of the extent to which their thoughtlessness is carried. It was meant to bring up to the mark of duty those who are sensible of having fallen gradually away from it; to revive those whose hearts are failing them; to renew the high purpose and the strong resolve which, by degrees, have been lowered and weakened in the atmosphere of this world's cares and enjoyments; to set all consciences at work, to make each man's memory busy with his past life, and to render his eye unflinchingly observant of his present condition, so that the confession of sin, the emotion of godly sorrow, and the work of penitence, either as concerns the individual or the whole Church, shall have a fulness, a fervor,

and a thoroughness unattainable in ordinary times, or under ordinary circumstances. This is the true work of Lent. The season expects, as its fruit, the laying aside the weight of our besetting sins, and the obtaining a much clearer vision of the objects presented to our faith, a much truer and higher estimate of the motives, principles, and rewards of a Christian life, and a great increase of readiness and ability to treat the hinderances of this world with prompt energy, its enticements with a collected and unyielding spirit, its lawful goods with a wise reserve. To accomplish this result, whatever is most effective in ritual arrangement, of most moment in revealed doctrine, most instructive in the examples of self-sacrificing men, such as the Blessed Paul the Apostle, and above all, most moving in the History of our LORD and SAVIOUR, is brought together to give direction to the tide of Lenten thoughts and emotions, and swell them at last, when the commemorations of the Holy Week arrive, in force sufficient to burst the bonds of our old sins, and render us worthier of fellowship in our Redeemer's Death and glorious Resurrection.

But now, it will not be amiss to consider how this season may appear from a less exciting point of view.

We are a body, let us say, of sober-minded

Christians. We believe that it was meant that we should plod industriously on the road to Heaven. It seems to us that the Church's system agrees well with the view we have taken of the matter. We do not find any excitement in it. It leads us to no extravagance of feeling or of conduct. Now, we consider it to be excitement and extravagance when, in the Church at large, multitudes labor together under strong religious feeling, prompting and sustaining each other in unusual manifestations of concern, and availing themselves of public services, at unusual hours, to heighten the effect which the prevailing sentiment has had on their minds. We regard an individual as being in a like excited condition, and in danger of becoming extravagant, when particular ideas, such, for instance, as that of his own sinfulness, or of self-consecration to God's service, get uppermost in his mind; when he longs for some special light or aid of Divine grace; when he feels as if a crisis in his life had come; when he gives himself up to high-wrought emotions; when he aims at extraordinary devotion, or self-denial, or a standard of sanctity quite above the common range. We are accustomed to think that the Church has nothing to do with producing or sanctioning such conditions of the mind. We expect

her to lead us calmly and steadily through the year—through every succeeding year, till our lives are all fulfilled. She is most methodical in her action, and even in her pace. Her system is an admirable piece of polished mechanism, and performs its revolutions with truth and nicety. For instance, she has an important duty to fulfil in setting forth and commending to our serious attention, the whole circle of revealed truth. She distributes, therefore, the principal doctrines of Revelation at appropriate intervals along the year, beginning with the Incarnation, thence proceeding to Universal Redemption, thence to the necessity and efficacy of Repentance in connection with the one Atonement for sin, thence to the Resurrection and the Life Eternal, thence to Spiritual illumination and strength as coming only from above, concluding all with the doctrine of the Divine Nature. In the discharge of this her duty to make known and enforce the Truth, she has connected it with a series of most becoming and appropriate commemorations, so that each doctrine is shown together with that fact of sacred history which most distinctly illustrates it, and while we bear in mind the Doctrine, we also honor the particular Event with due observance. In all this course the Church has frequent opportunity, to

teach gravely and calmly the conduct which is proper on our part, to point out our duties, and inculcate the corresponding affections. According to this view, we form our estimate of the meaning and use of the season of Lent. We observe three things in it. First, it insures our paying proper heed to the great doctrine of the Atonement. Secondly, it engages us in a most fitting and reverential commemoration of our Saviour's Passion. And, thirdly, it takes advantage of so solemn an anniversary to prepare us for it, by carrying us through a time of peculiar seriousness of thought, and of attention to our religious duties. This is what Lent is to us. We therefore go more frequently to Church, and expect an additional course of lectures on week days. We look for more frequent exhortations to repentance in the Sunday sermons, and for more striking descriptions of man's need of a Saviour. When Passion week comes, we feel the propriety and profitableness of rehearsing all the narratives of our LORD's sufferings and death. And then, Lent being ended, we are sensible that it has been a very judiciously planned and instructive season. It has had a positive, if not very marked, effect upon our minds. It was a serious season. We retain a distinct impression of the great number of lessons and ser-

mons that treated of one kind of subjects only, and most important subjects they were! But we have experienced no perturbation of spirit. We are conscious of having made no extraordinary efforts. We did not feel called upon to vary in any decided way the even tenor of our lives. We are not now reckoning up the gains of special opportunities that were so much above the rest of the year. As we look back, there are no soul-stirring incidents of the inward life to be seen. As we look forward, there is no lifting the eye with a steadier, brighter gaze along the upward path, no pulsations that are stronger than usual, no such drawing of the breath as he has who has just come out of a trial, and is wrought up to meet, if need be, greater trials still! We have passed Lent soberly.

I cannot but express my fear that there is too much of *this sort* of sobriety in our Church; not in the Church herself, however, in her appointments, or their intention, but among her members. Her season of Lent was meant to be precisely what too many of her children have not found it to be—perhaps, deeming that it was sober and decorous that it should not be—mistaking dulness for sobriety, and immobility for decorum. The Church herself is animated by her LORD's own spirit. She yearns to draw men

closer to herself, and Him. She is filled with the knowledge which He has imparted to her, of the wants of man's nature in a world like this. She never forgets, as man does, how short his time is, how vast are his capacities and gifts. She is conscious that, of the abundant means at her disposal for his benefit, he has in numerous cases made hardly a distant approach to an adequate use of them; and her motherly heart is penetrated by the thought that her children, by their slowness, their indifference, their folly—even the better part of them, by their own undiscerned relaxation of nerve and slackening of effort, are losing, year by year, what it were worth a thousand worlds to gain. Among all her treasures, then, she counts the opportunities of Lent the chiefest: for this very purpose—to reclaim the wandering; to revive the drooping; to renerve the enfeebled; to unfilm the eye that is growing dim; to make all see clearly again where the mark is set for their attainment; to dissatisfy the easy soul with self; to make the dull-minded plodder feel that he has to run a race, and not to creep into Heaven, and that he has only time, and not all eternity, in which to accomplish it. She would have all churches thronged in Lent. She would send a universal stir throughout her borders. She would sub-

ject all minds to the most potent influences of the season. She has no fear of the consequences that strong and wide-spread sympathy may produce. Her desire is that all her children and all who hear her voice, may be thoroughly roused. Her call *is* to extraordinary efforts to cleanse the conscience, to perfect repentance, to win self-mastery, to break off the shackles of evil habits, to gain some large advances towards the completeness of a Christian character. Such a call cannot be obeyed by the multitude without the manifestation of excited feelings. Only persons of a peculiarly rigid nature can obey it without giving way to emotions, cherishing desires, and forming resolves, which, if they could be known, would seem extravagant to those who esteem it Religion's principal office to compose the spirits, and keep all things quiet.

A point here requires consideration. When man proposes to himself to go steadily and staidly through the year, accompanying the religious seasons in their course for calm instruction and remembrance, and meaning, in the way of his duty as he sees it, to go on neither fast nor slow, but only to keep going on, what need has he of such a reviving and stirring time as I have described the season of Lent to be, according to its true intent?

His need is in this: *it is not in man* to walk on so surely and composedly to his journey's end. Hell is below him; Heaven is above him; evil spirits are all around him. A thousand plots are laid for his destruction; a myriad of active hands are ready for their opportunity. All his route has been surveyed beforehand by his adversary. Temptations are in ambush wherever cover is afforded; barriers are built at the most difficult points, and every vantage spot has been made the most of. The lusts within him are already friends with the liers-in-wait for his soul. And surely his own natural sloth, love of ease, and incredulity are poor forces with which to assault and overcome the well-defended barriers of the world and the devil. Most certain it is, that if he has laid out in mind a "slow and sure" progress for the year, and thinks he is accomplishing it, he has made but little progress at all; he has gone but a short way up the ascent; he has not even gone far and fast enough to meet the first obstacle out of all the number yet to be surpassed. Is the value *to him* of a year's uninterrupted calm to be rated very high? Would it be an unwise disturbance of his peace, that should bear him along with the multitude to the House of God for the Lenten prayers, and fill him with the contagion of

their hopes and fears, their ardent sensibility and zeal? This is the very thing such souls as his require. He has planned a course that is not a race, not a strife, not an arduous journey in a limited time, and therefore in nothing like the course that is described in Holy Scripture. Not one of the many fearful features of his condition has he fairly taken into view, and certainly there is need that the season which opens with the scene of Satan's encounter with our LORD, and proceeds in the tone which such an opening indicates, should gain absolute control for the time of all his thoughts, fill him with the contrition of a genuine penitent, and rouse him to the exertion which, once begun, ought never to be relaxed, and which is demanded by the victory and prize he has yet to win. When once he sees these objects in their true relations to the world and to himself, he will never more compose his mind in the expectation of a calm, uneventful, undisturbed career. He will learn to suspect and dread the long monotony of an unexcited mind. He will understand, at last, his obligations to the Church, that once at least in every year provides the most effective means to animate him with the true, fresh, original spirit of his calling.

Where, or how numerous, are the signs that

this reviving and stimulating power of the season is at work? It is a power that is very little used in comparison with what might be. I speak of little, only when the largeness of possible results is considered, and with reference to the effect upon the whole Church of a Lent that gathered all her members for the work of discipline. What individuals, even under present circumstances may gain in the way of guidance, enlightenment, encouragement, and strength to be more faithful than ever they have been before, far surpasses any computation. There is no lack of motive, therefore, no lack of the stimulant that hope supplies, to induce each man to institute in his own soul the full work of renewing zeal. While he opens his mind to all the instruction in sacred doctrine which Lent conveys, while he reverently joins in the commemoration of our LORD's Death and Resurrection, let him be assured that, even though he does this, the season will yet pass all but unused by him, and be barren of its choicest fruit, if at its close, in his tone of mind, his temper, and his conscience, clear witness is not borne to that result of Lenten discipline and of his closer and more real fellowship with our LORD, which St. Paul exhibited as his Lent and Easter tokens, the counterpart in him of his Master's death and rising again: "I am crucified

with CHRIST: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

VI.

THE PUBLIC DUTIES OF LENT.

THERE are lives in which Lent is no such interruption of the smooth tenor of worldliness, as I have described in a previous section, for they are regulated throughout the year by an unselfish devotion, and by a clear understanding of the relation which this mortal life holds to the world to come. The course of living which is so arrested is that of persons who flatter themselves that they are Christians, in reality, while they are only glossing their conduct over with a thin coating of religious forms and pretences—or of those who, without any secret reservations, wish and mean to serve God with all their hearts, but who are betrayed into forgetfulness of duty, deluded by the speciousness of society around them into a compliance with its easy maxims, and made more worldly in fact than their conscience approves of, or their theory of religion sanctions. Upon the self-deception of the one class, and the forgetfulness or compliance of the other, the season breaks in with its call to

self-recollection, and a stricter life : a call which is heard by the one with unwilling ears, but which the other receives, if not at first with cordiality, yet with that consent of the judgment, and that inward consciousness of the support given by the season to an infirm and yielding spirit, which at the last may possibly engage the whole heart in its observance. Among these two classes of persons must be included a large proportion of those who, by baptism, have been permitted to bear the name of CHRIST. Who that lives in this age of the Church will venture to except himself altogether from the latter of these two classes? Who has not been too compliant with the world in its indifference, if not its hostility, to God? Who has not fallen into self-indulgent ways? Who has not weakened his soul with too easily allowed excuses, so often repeated perhaps as to become habitual, for not coming up to the mark which conscience set him, of his duty? Who can say that he has been any thing like so vigorous as he might have been in his endeavors, by the help of Divine Grace, to reverse the fortunes of that war within him of the law in his members against the law in his mind, so much of the history of which is recorded in the sentence—"What I would I do not, but what I hate that do?" How can it

be doubted that Lent comes to most of us, to furnish an answer to the question which must be asked by every heart that has any sensitiveness to the evil of its condition—who shall deliver me from this bondage to sin? The prayers, the penitence, the searching and clearing of conscience, the renewal of zeal, the gain in self-mastery, the study of CHRIST our Saviour, and the acquirement of more of His spirit towards this life, its pleasures, trials, and duties—these effect and certify our deliverance; these constitute the use and efficacy of the season of Lent; by means of these, a Lent well kept will bring us to that grateful exclamation of the unburdened heart, in which the Apostle uttered his sense of the blessed freedom of the Gospel, as contrasted with nature's bond-service—"I thank God, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord."

It is not the plan of these Essays to attempt a thorough survey of the duties of Lent, or to enter into full or systematic details of the methods to be pursued. Trusting that some readers will be found, to whom it will be instructive to approach the season from that point of view, whence it appears as specially adapted to meet the exigencies of life in a disordered world, I only propose to suggest a few thoughts that run in the same general direction, but without carrying them to their conclu-

sion, or presenting the topics out of which they rise, in their fulness. If the preceding pages have been read in a thoughtful and earnest spirit, I may assume that the reader is disposed to make good use of a season which, for so many ages and by such multitudes of believers, has been devoted to the special treatment of that plague of the human heart, Sin; that terror of the mortal soul, Death; that desire and expectation of the undying spirit, Eternity. In such a frame of mind he will obtain some degree of assistance and encouragement, I trust, from a few suggestions concerning his performance of the special duties to which Lent calls him, whether in public or private.

Lent is a public solemnity as well as a private fast, in recognition of the fact that, as one body of believers, we have our blessings, our responsibilities, our liabilities to danger, our sins and our punishments, just as we have them, also, in our separate and individual capacity. This is specially true of our union with all the faithful throughout the world in the one Body of Christ, but it is true also of our association with each other in subordinate portions of the Church—in dioceses and congregations. God prospers us, or He withholds prosperity, according as He sees us united together in such characteristics as render us meet for treatment

in the one way or the other. He has modes of trial suited to us in our corporate capacity. In that capacity we have work to accomplish. He deals with us according to the progress we make in it. What individuals among us may be, is a thing apart: they shall have their private discipline, which may differ in nature and result from that to which at the same time they are subjected as members of the Public Body. They may have to endure trials, or share in the loss of privileges, in common with and on account of the conduct of others with whom they are associated, even while forming, in their personal character and the communications of Divine Grace to their own souls, total exceptions to the general condition of those around them. Thus there is a common lot in which each individual must have his share. We have a common discipline through which to pass. And the Fast is, therefore, openly sanctified throughout the community, as well as in the believer's solitary closet. The solemn assembly is called. The people are gathered. The whole congregation address themselves to the great business of the season. All this implies, of necessity, our frequent meeting together in Church, and our attendance upon services that are as much adapted as may be, to express the ideas which are in all our minds,

to create in us a common sentiment, and to advance the Church, as one body of believers, in the work of discipline.

There is connected with this, however, a further and still stronger motive. St. Paul tells us that CHRIST, in the great sacrifice with the commemoration of which the season closes, and in his previous life of self-denial which we take now for our special study, gave Himself *for the Church*. Thus He showed His love for it; and shall the Church not publicly show her sensibility to His sufferings when the season of His endurance of them recurs? Shall she not even show greater sensibility to that in herself which called forth this exhibition of His unutterable affection? Doubtless she must; why ask the question? Why suggest the idea that the object of His great love can be so insensible? Well, then, if it be so certain that she must show herself at this season thus mindful of Him and of her own condition, how is she to do it? The Church is no abstraction: *the Visible Company of Believers* throughout the world constitute that Body for which our Blessed LORD shed His cleansing Blood, that he might purify it, and present it to Himself in unspotted, glorious, and unfading beauty. Now, a company of men act as a company, not each one apart by himself, but

in the common assembly, in the public gathering. Let the weight be considered of the obligation resting on the Church on earth to show before her LORD in Heaven, some fitting sign of her everliving consciousness of what He did for her in the time of His Cross and Passion, and of her earnestness in endeavoring to be worthier of that benefit, and we shall ascertain the strength of the first and highest motive why each and every member of the Church should join himself to the public congregation at the appointed hour of Lenten prayer. It is a secondary motive that the public service tends to private and personal edification, because the force of this motive is variable, and dependent upon the moods and conditions of individual minds. It may increase or decrease with the change of circumstances. Through the misjudgment of the individual, it may sometimes amount to little or nothing. Yet, whatever these private peculiarities of the members of the Church may be, the unchangeableness of the relations of the Church herself to CHRIST, her Sacred Head, demands in this her time of earthly trial, that the Fast should be publicly and formally sanctified and the congregation assembled; that none should be absent from it except for special and reasonable causes, and that the supplications of many

hearts should be joined, that God would spare His *people*, and give not His *heritage* to reproach. This voice of an imploring multitude has, at this season, a special significance and force. It is a sound that reaches up to Heaven, but not like that which is raised when vessels are engulfed, or the shaken earth brings down the city's walls on its inhabitants, and the separate terrors of many hearts combine in a fearful cry of agony; it is the thoughtful, premeditated, and fervent supplication of Brethren, each one conscious of his own need truly, but with that consciousness mingling an unselfish concern for those whom he sees around him, or knows to be in company with him, owning the same LORD, the same Duty, the same Hope, the same Charity and Faith. The House of God is the place where such supplications are to be made, and there they increase in power as the numbers that offer them increase.

On the grounds which I have thus rapidly sketched, we place the obligation to attend upon the increased number of public services with which Lent is everywhere marked among us. We attend upon them in our corporate capacity, to bear our part in a great public duty, and to promote the common welfare. The world beholds the solemn observance, and is impressed by it. The Church collectively is

edified. CHRIST sees it as part of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied that the befitting remembrance of His sorrows should be kept up. The first intent and use of the public and united service is thus fulfilled.

There remains to be mentioned, however, a benefit which is found in our attendance upon these Public Services, so suited to our individual need as, by itself, to render them of priceless value to the soul.

Going up to the House of God as part of the company of believers, each one must of necessity go with his own separate consciousness, impenetrable by any human eye, of what he is and of the special significance of his presenting himself before God under such circumstances. He cannot, if he would, wholly merge the individual in the body ecclesiastical. His outward, formal, corporate act which, in that respect, is the same act as that of ten thousand other men, has its separate and private though not discordant interpretation. He appears in public to contribute his part towards the common object, but at the same time to receive far more than he gives—impressions of the outward scenes of the Sanctuary that vary according to the surface which his mind presents to them, and which he takes home as his only personal token of the genuineness of the

service. Thus he accompanies the multitude to the House of God: in the first place, indeed, for the testimony of the truth, for the welfare of the whole Church, in the fellowship of all saints; but next, and not least, for the sake of his own peculiar share in the authorized ministrations of the Sanctuary; for the comfort of its prayers, the profitableness of its instructions, the silent inbreathing of its spirit of devotion and heavenly mindedness, and the sympathy of friends and fellow-believers. He expects to incorporate these into the secret workings of his own spirit, and to carry away with him an individual blessing. God be thanked that it may be so! and dear does His House become, and longed for and welcome the Hour of Prayer, when we have found this comfort and advantage in them! Out of doors is the great Babylon that unsanctified worldly Power has builded, and in which our lot for the present is cast. It catches the eye. It allures the fancy. In many concentric circles, where self is in the midst, it sweeps round till the weak brain grows dizzy with the excitement. Even though one would not be of it while dwelling in it, yet somehow being in it, all one's cares, occupations, and thoughts get this circular motion, and self is in the centre. Miserable self! whose faults, errors, and sins,

whose infirmities of temper, purpose, and performance, leave a wretched mark on all that one does, on the places he frequents, on each apartment of his habitation, on the very garb he wears! Sickened at his experience of his own nature, unable to get rid of this pest of his own bosom which the world's steady, silent training in selfishness fastens upon him, in some moments of the consciousness of better things he longs to be at once and finally separated from such evil companionship, and echoes in his heart the Psalmist's wish, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." CHRIST answers such a wish at all times, but especially in the season of Lent when opportunities abound, and His voice is heard in every Church throughout the land reiterating his assurance, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest. My doors of refuge are open. I have a sanctified hour for you, fenced in from unhallowed intrusion. You shall hear My Voice in My pure Word. You shall gain assurance from these ministrations and the fellowship of those whose need is like your own, that your devotions are accepted. Each moment that passes in the congregation, where I am in the midst, exerts a wholesome influence over your soul. The sum of all the moments you so spend shall be, in one word—

spiritual refreshment; a mind more composed; a heart somewhat unburdened; fresher and more hopeful feelings; the sense of a seasonable respite granted you amid the world's tumult and the disturbances of life, in which you may gather strength to go forth again; and that which crowns all—the satisfaction of having spent an hour, as much as may be on earth, with God.”

We are accustomed both to hear and to read words on this subject that promise much. High-wrought expressions, indeed, belong to the subject. It is the professional style. When a Divine handles his peculiar topics, he is expected to declare positively, as far as the logical force of words will go, the great results which may be attained, if only the ordinances of religion be faithfully observed. It seems as if, having begun to speak of them, he must go on to say just so much. It is usually a far less impressive style than the subject and the language would lead us to expect. It fails oftener than it succeeds in giving men an idea that the matters so treated are real. But I can conceive that, in a somewhat more reflective mood than usual, under softening influences which he could hardly explain to himself, a man might find an unwonted force in ideas of spiritual refreshment so expressed, and being

half inclined to hope for their reality, might seriously ask whether it be indeed possible to derive such aid and comfort from religion on this bewildering earth, during this distracting life. He might dwell on the possibility that a slumbering soul like his may indeed wake up to such a reality, and find the circumstances of the Lenten season as favorable as they are represented for gaining such blessings. His convictions and his hesitancy, his impulse to act as he felt and his weakness to do so, would equally appear in the language that would express the issue of his meditations: "What is there on earth to be desired in comparison with these Divine refreshments of a worn and weary spirit! How can I better use forty days than in endeavoring to secure them for myself—if I can only find time to do so, if the world will only let me!"

If he can only find time! If the world will only grant him its permission! It will be well to subject these points to a brief discussion.

It must not be concealed or kept back, when men are urged to observe Lent, that the more frequent calls then made upon them to attend the public services will meet with hinderances which it may not always be easy to overcome, or in which it may even be religious to acquiesce. The wish, that is condi-

tioned on having time enough, to avail one's self of the advantages of the season, may in such cases be honestly expressed. Other and prior duties may lay claim to the whole day. Intercourse with society, even in forms that do not constitute duty, may yet exert a sort of tyranny from which, for the moment, there is no escape. And yet there *is* a way of breaking through these trammels, which only needs the exercise of a resolute spirit to be found effectual, if not even easy.

The world itself could almost tell a man what to do, when he thus is quite convinced of the obligation of keeping the season, partly inclined to do so, but still more inclined perhaps to persuade himself that it is impossible—at least for him. For the world understands what Lent is. It is well aware that, in the ordinary dealings of life, throughout the general course of the year, it has a certain advantage over members of the Church. It is assured of a community of interests and occupations among men, saints and sinners alike, which the former cannot avoid, and the latter find most serviceable for strengthening their numbers and influence. But the world also knows of a counterbalance, in this respect, to its own evil. It is not ignorant that the same supreme Power which completed the circle of the year

equally for all mankind, and marked it with its natural divisions, has appointed also the seasons of the Sacred Calendar and assigned them their spiritual office. It is no secret to be spiritually discerned, that in the Church as well as in Nature, God crowns the year with His goodness and His clouds drop fatness, and that the harvest-time of souls is preceded by that season of penitence which the course of the Sun of Righteousness marks out, when, upon the broken soil of contrite hearts, grace falls from Heaven in enriching showers. Not more certainly is this progress of the seasons observable by men in nature, than in the Church. They know for what purpose the Spring Fast is appointed. They expect the manifestations of its spiritual industry. They are prepared for the concentration of the Church's strength upon works peculiar to the season.

Would, then, that members of the Church were as well prepared for the call on them to withdraw into retirement, as the world is to have them so called! Would that they understood how the course of society at large would accommodate itself to their temporary withdrawal from it! Would that they felt the value of the leisure and freedom they would thereby gain for the performance of those very duties in regard to which they truly say,

while leading the ordinary tenor of their lives, that they have not time and the world hinders them !

The questions can be readily asked which effectually dismiss the world's importunity, and tell us how to gain time and freedom for the calls of Religion. They relate to the commonest matters of our daily life. Need so many visits as are on the list be paid in just these six weeks ? Must the shops be frequented as though there were ample time for even trivial purchases ? Cannot the saunter of pleasure be quickened and shortened into the mere healthful walk for exercise ? ' Need conversation with a friend reach the last limits of the subject, and consume the last disposable moment of time ? Can the evening entertainments not be abridged, or even omitted, till the Holy Week be passed ? Cannot the business of the day be compressed into hours less by at least one ? Must we be so well up with the news of the day as in ordinary times ? May not the journal or the pleasant volume be postponed till after Easter ? Cannot less time be spent at table ? Cannot sleep or the preparations of dress be diminished ? Cannot the transition from one form of occupation to another be more promptly made ? Cannot **TIME** be saved in a thousand ways ? Who knows not that it can ! Who is there

whose conscience does not tell him that it can ! Assuredly, were any man so to save it, no power of this world would dream of taking from him what he has so deliberately, carefully, and earnestly set apart that he might give it unto God our Redeemer. Let each person who is "baptized into the death" of CHRIST say frankly to the world—I want this daily portion of my time which has hitherto been spent with you in lawful forms of intercourse, for the special service of my God and the good of my soul. Though he may have to wring from it a reluctant consent at the price of some temporary loss or annoyance, yet he will find in the end that over and above the spiritual benefit which he has thereby gained, he has only done after all what the world expected of him as a Christian ; that it will honor his consistency and manliness ; and that it will have a wholesome dread hereafter of opposing with its shadowy claims, his strong and steadfast resolve to render up his heart and soul, his time and all his life, at the call of Him who made and redeemed him, and who will give, in the place of the little which the world can take away, that immeasurable portion, the smallest particle of which the world can never give.

VII.

PRIVATE DUTIES OF LENT.

By the private duties of Lent I mean those which each man performs for the most part by and for himself, the primary design and immediate result of which is his own personal edification. Our treatment of this topic will necessarily recall to some extent the ideas which were before us in the fifth section.

It is not likely that the special work of Lent will be so misconceived as to be thought different in kind from that which constitutes our duty throughout the year, and throughout the whole course of our lives. It is our very vocation as Christians always to humble ourselves before God on account of our sins; to be ever examining our consciences; to use the means, in which Religion instructs us, for the acquirement of self-mastery; and to cultivate the spirit and the habit of true godliness and devotion. To mention these things is only to describe a Christian: so that the special features of Lent do not consist in these, which are the characteristics of the whole life of the believer.

But herein the season finds its peculiar nature and advantage: that, for a time, it quickens our zeal in the performance of these duties, and sustains it at a point which corresponds, indeed, with their unspeakable importance, but which cannot be reached under ordinary circumstances, or maintained as the permanent condition of ordinary men.

Our thoughts have already been occupied with the fact that sin is a deep-seated evil. Unmolested in its dominion, or but faintly resisted, its tyranny shall last, and grow, and burn forever. The grace of CHRIST alone can set us free. Within our lifetime here that point is to be determined. Life is short, and, to our apprehension, uncertain. The power and the danger of sin are not concentrated at one point of our life, to be met there by one triumphant display of the grace that saves us. In all forms of earth, at every moment of time, the evil is present, seeking rather to be unknown and unthought of than recognized. To meet this state of things our heavenly succor comes to us through familiar agencies, in the common occasions of life. How dreadful, then, is the meaning of our every-day existence! What strange insensibility it is, that does not feel how greatly the terror is increased when all our eternity is made dependent upon these

accustomed, and, to the natural eye, trivial incidents of yesterday, and to-day, and to-morrow! When threatened by calamity in a distinct shape, however vast and fearful, and when full warning and time are given to provide the requisite defences, there is a calmness of mind and self-possession that admits in the mean while of attention being paid to matters which, though of immediate convenience, are yet of quite inferior concern, and are to disappear forever when the final struggle comes. But our mortal calamity is here, and there, and everywhere. In the bright sky its sign may suddenly appear. On the soft wind its fatal breath may come. At any moment it may heave the solid ground beneath us, and all the fabric of our earthly toil be rent and ruined. There is no security but in the invisible succors of Divine Grace, which we receive in measures proportioned to our sense of need, and to the zeal with which we labor for them, hour by hour, and day by day, in the exercise of faith, under the law of duty, in acts of religion, under the discipline of CHRIST. Who can be mindful enough of this his condition? Who can devote to it enough of his time and energy, and be enough withdrawn from other occupations? What other things shall deeply engage him? What *heart* shall he have for *anxieties* about

his temporal affairs, for leisurely enjoyment of health, society, station, and the other accessories of life? Surely his fair representation is drawn in Holy Scripture in terms the literal force of which cannot be explained away ;—the stranger in the world! the pilgrim on the earth! the sojourner for a night, who does not spread out all his goods, but is content with little, and is up early on the morrow pressing forward on his way.

The reader can fill out this idea for himself, without further description. He will feel all its force, perhaps, as he remembers how, in some moment of religious warmth or of unusually clear discernment of spiritual realities, the life and character, the principles, the motives, and the destiny of the Christian, as described in the New Testament, stood out before his eyes in brightness, unobscured and untinged by the thick and many-hued atmosphere of the world, seeming to be no more than what a life formed under such influences should be, to hold any correspondence with them at all, and not more than what he would thenceforth faithfully strive to realize. But if he remember this, he remembers also how soon the fervor died away, and the brightness of the picture faded ; how the effort to transfer from his imagination to his heart and conduct the impres-

sions he had received, only broke them up and disfigured them; how impossible it seemed to act with befitting energy upon the broad facts and simple motives which he had yet seen to be as high as Heaven, and as deep as Hell; how their eternal scope and infinite import were at once reduced by him to the proportions of earth and time, and put in dubious balance against the interests of this world. Such was his experience, and such, assuredly, it usually is with the majority even of those who seek, by the grace of God, to escape from the power of sin, and in whom that grace shall yet work a final deliverance. The facts, the principles, the motives of religion are seen to be of transcendent importance and urgency by the very beings who seem to have done their utmost, when they have made a place for those truths among the mixed crowd of earthly influences, where, if felt at all, it must be in proportionably diminished power.

Now the Gospel is a practical system of life, adapted to deal with just such a state of things as this. It is God's adaptation of Heavenly Truth and Divine Power to the wretchedness of earth and the weakness of man. It takes the average of what mortal men accomplish with such principles as its own, and begins at once the solution of two questions: how shall

men be kept up even to the ordinary standard of a Christian life; and how shall they be raised above it? We shall find these questions solved, each one according to his own soul's need, in the Church's method of Lenten discipline.

It is admitted that our principles as Christians are higher than our practice can reach. It is not intended that this difference should exist, but the fact of the difference is recognized. That it should be so vast is treated as, indeed, a grievous, but still a remediable evil. The remedy, however, is not to weaken the facts, or lower the motives under which we act, or render less appropriate such an account of them and of their legitimate effect as may be fairly drawn from Holy Scripture. This account must stand, and turning our eyes to it from time to time, we compare what we are with what we should be, and draw such conclusions respecting our own position and prospects as reason and conscience point out. We learn to estimate our opportunities aright. We ascertain the extent of our powers, and understand ourselves more thoroughly. We form a truer idea of the work we have to accomplish. We learn more and more of the scope and bearing of the instructions we receive; the words of warning and encouragement have a

deeper and deeper meaning in our ears. We strive, we resolve and re-resolve, we persevere, we fulfil month after month of this changeful history, but whatever comes of it, nothing will be more sure than the frequent recurrence of the feeling—oh, that we could make more progress! that we could be rid of these distractions! that our minds and hearts were not so full of worldly cares! that we could give ourselves more closely to this one thing! that we could nerve ourselves to make sacrifices, and undertake works that would produce in us the spirit which they should have who are conscious of a great deliverance! that in prayer, self-restraint, abstinence from pleasure, strictness of life, and consecration to the service of God, we could show some adequate zeal! that we might either be able to bring our principles and our practice into closer correspondence, or feel ourselves free to give up the attempt altogether! that we could either fulfil our calling, or relinquish it!

Most wisely and mercifully has CHRIST ordered our course of discipline to meet this state of mind. We wish for what cannot, except in special instances and after long practice, be a permanent condition of the soul. We desire to reach a condition which can be approached only by degrees. Yet our wish is

only that our religion may be a real thing, and bear the true stamp of its origin. Our desire is only that which must be formed by beings of ordinary intelligence and sense of right, in such circumstances as ours—not to pass our whole life in the use of words of the highest import, yet remaining on the lowest level of commonplace and meager attainments. There is but one practicable way in which this desire can be met. Opportunity shall be given us of rising for awhile above our ordinary self. Such a special effort as we are capable of making shall have a place provided for it in the regular system of the Gospel. Every thing shall be made to favor, at least for a time, our apprehension and realization of the superhuman and unearthly element in religion. It shall be no one's fault but our own, if we do not satisfy ourselves of our capacity to carry our principles many a degree higher than in our ordinary practice. From that height we shall enlarge our range of vision, and see attainments as possible that never came into our view before. We shall have an earnest of the kind of life which must be led, habitually, by one who thoroughly and permanently realizes truths into which we thus gain, for a season, a deeper though still but a partial insight. And if we use this opportunity as persons whose desire to

have it was sincere, its results will satisfy us that there is progress to be made, even by the feeblest, towards the attainments of the strongest; that we need not acquiesce in the painful unreality of professions never duly matched with practice; that we are susceptible of the true life and power of religious motives; that the deadening monotony of our existence has been effectually broken up; that we cannot fall back again into spiritless mediocrity of living, but, though the special opportunity passes by, and we return again, before our faculties are overstrained, to the ordinary tenor of our ways, our feelings are fresher, our hopes are higher, our impressions of Divine things deeper, our lives as members of CHRIST more real.

Such is the place which Lent holds in relation to our personal needs, as a wise Providence has ordained it in merciful consideration of our weakness. It is simply a time to be more zealous in our religion than we can be at ordinary times, with a view to the effect of such a special exercise of zeal in heightening our tone of mind, enlarging our experience, ridding us from the formalities which a weak and inconsistent practice may fasten on us, and securing for us an advance upon the remissness of our former mode of life. Lent, therefore,

has no new duties, but only a new zeal to perform old duties. Its one characteristic is to concentrate our duties, and so to render them the subjects of more continuous attention. Whatever concerns our personal religion, in particular, it thus brings to a point, and fixes our thoughts upon it. Hence it is that the private history of the season, in the case of each one of us, consists in the fervor and frequency of his secret prayers, the thoroughness of his self-examination, and the extent and forms of his self-denial. All times and seasons are to be hallowed by prayer, but if it be at morn and night on ordinary days, let it be thrice a day at least in Lent. The occasions when we search and examine our consciences will regularly recur, in every life that is wisely and religiously ordered, but the work of examination should be constantly in mind throughout this season. To restrain our appetites and forego our pleasures should be our repeated act of discipline throughout our lives, if we would gain mastery over ourselves, and entertain the apostle's holy fear of being in the end a castaway. But abstinence is the law of Lent, and self-indulgence its exception. Thus only is its course faithfully and profitably fulfilled. For a few weeks we feel that the life which we lead in this mortal flesh, we live only

by the faith of the Son of God. That faith, if we are His living members, is the hidden principle of all our life: but how often is it hard to discern it! how often does the world overlay it with cares and pleasures! how far apart are the indications that such a principle is having any control over us! In a well-kept Lent, however, it comes out in force and clearness. It regains its predominance. It is the manifest stay of our existence. By what else could the daily fast, and the hourly prayer, and the unbroken consciousness of what we are in God's sight, be explained? By what else could such a mode of life, for even a much shorter period, be sustained? When it is all accomplished, we shall know, by many tokens which days so spent will impress upon our inmost souls, that the power of sin, the efficacy of grace, our state of peril, the vanity of earth, the reality of things invisible, and all else that goes to make up the true meaning of our mortal life, has indeed been brought home to us as it never was before; that during as long a period of time as our present feebleness would allow, we have approached the close correspondence with such facts, which our whole term of days on earth should exhibit; and that the sacred season, brief as it seems when it is over, has left an impression that will last only

to be deepened, we trust, if God shall spare us to another Lent.

But this result presupposes that we are in earnest to understand the principle of the season, and determined to fulfil its duties as we have light and opportunity. With such a determination, there can be no impediment great enough to deprive us entirely of the advantages of the season, or prevent that effectual schooling of the temper, the appetite, and the will, for which its private duties were especially designed. With a purpose less resolutely formed, however, and with a secret inclination to get off as easily as conscience will permit, excuses for remissness will abound, and every day have its dispensation from one duty or another. The very nature of our duty, so far as it is strictly personal, is a trial of our spirits in these respects, and affords us special facilities to gain by Lent, in spite of the cares of life and the opposition of the world, or to lose, however much a gracious Providence may favor us. This is amply illustrated in those forms of Lenten discipline to which I just now referred, and which remind us that we need, in a special time of grace, to exercise a special circumspection, and readiness of the will. The daily fast, for instance: does one wish a dispensation from it? Prompt to the wish, it shall be made

out in fair and imposing shape to satisfy the conscience. His frame is delicate; his nervous system easily deranged; his temper excitable; his occupation needs all his strength; he is exposed to unpleasant criticism; besides, he doubts somewhat the obligation of the fast, and, finally, if he only fasts from sin, his diet otherwise may be just as usual. But does he, on the contrary, truly desire to observe this feature of the season? What can possibly hinder him? He knows that fasting, recognized by our LORD and practised by His apostles, is as truly a Gospel duty, as prayer is. He knows that its object is two-fold—to bring the body under and to subject the will. If the body be already in subjection and have but strength sufficient for its daily work, still the self-indulgent spirit needs discipline, and while food enough is taken in simple and substantial forms to maintain the required strength, perhaps a little of its quantity and most of its variety may be diminished, and nothing be prepared to tempt the already healthful appetite. He will go through the season in this manner, if circumstances require, carrying out this feature of its duties most effectually, without attracting observation from the most watchful eye: but if unhappily it should be otherwise, he heeds it not; his part is but to bear testimony to the

discipline of CHRIST, letting the guilt of ridicule or opposition rest where it may.

So also, in the case of prayer. It is a duty from which the reluctant spirit obtains exemption, on the plea of the want of privacy, the constant pressure of business, and the like impediments. But one who honestly desires to come as near as possible to a literal compliance with the precept to pray alway, that he may keep the channel of communication between his soul and God flowing ever full with the Grace for which he has such special use, will watch his opportunity when, if not upon his knees alone, yet standing apart where no one will observe him, he can give full utterance to some want that boundless mercy waits to supply—or, if not even this—a brief phrase or a silent thought will serve to maintain the continuity of his devotions, to bind together the more formal occasions of public or of private prayer, and to render the whole season one prolonged communion with God. Mixed with this, and aided by it, will be those self-communings which will furnish him with frequent materials for his prayers, and suggest the liveliest motives of humility, of fear, of penitence, of dependence upon the mercy which he supplicates. He might easily avoid these, if he were so minded, and persuade him-

self that in his general confession of sins, all his particular deeds and traits of evil were included. His object is, however, to unveil himself to his own eyes as he is naked before Him with whom he has to do, in the observances of the season. To know what sinfulness is and to feel it, as only it can be known and felt by mortal men when each one by himself finds out the plague of his own heart, is his purpose, that when the season is ended his searching of conscience may be found effectual, and in the intolerable light of God's countenance the old Adam may die within him, and by the power of the same heavenly light and heat, the new man may be raised up to vigorous and undying life.

That our work may, by the end of Lent, be thoroughly performed—this expression contains the key to the whole season; to the right performance of all its duties, public and private. We aim at definite results, by the systematic use of the appointed means. By the greater concentration of our thoughts upon our spiritual condition; by compressing into the narrow limits of the season the work that spreads itself over all our years, and making Lent a sort of epitome of Life; by bracing ourselves in spirit for a degree of exertion that is to be sustained but for awhile; by all such efforts

it should be our purpose and hope to know ourselves the better, to understand the realities of our mortal condition more truly, to answer in some due measure the demands which such realities make upon us, and to gain thereby, what we can never wholly lose and what may be the foundation of a still greater advance in the time to come—mastery over self, facility in the use of the means of grace, and the consciousness that all things are possible to him that believeth: that even to us, whose unbelief needs so much help, attainments are possible of which, it may be, that as yet we have never even dreamt.

VIII.

LENT NOT BURDENSOME.

THE train of thought through which I have thus far carried the reader has tended to produce impressions mainly of one sort. He has considered moral evil, in its relation to his own nature as well as to the whole constitution of the world, and has thus prepared himself for a course of treatment, neither superficial in its character nor accordant with his present taste or convenience. He has seen the contrast between Lent and the ordinary tenor of a life regulated by the customs of the day. He has been reminded of the strict obligations of special duties that can only be effectually performed in a serious and earnest spirit. It may be that he is sensible that this cannot be done except with a corresponding effort; that it will be a tax upon his time and strength, which is far from being of easy payment. It is too large an outlay to be added to the expenditure of a life already pledged to worldly business or worldly pleasures; it must be the substitute for much of this, and be preceded

by a thorough retrenchment in these respects. The lavish freedom with which, at the invitation or the importunity of the world, he may have dispensed God's gifts to him of time and opportunity, is to be brought, if Lent sets the measure, within rules of a strict and forecasting economy. He discerns that such a procedure must necessarily touch and, wherever it meets with uncongenial elements, change the very substance of his character and life. It is not to end with Lent, but only to begin there. So that the season, instead of being a religious interlude in life, a sort of devotional decoration, with sober tints and graver style to set off more effectively the gay beauties of the rest of the year, is in fact only to concentrate the spirit, and epitomize the action of the whole course of our days on earth—that mortal temptation, the end of which is, a short death and an Eternal Resurrection.

Supposing that he has apprehended these ideas, and, in a measure, has been sensible of their influence, it may naturally be that he feels that this season is inherently a very sad one, and descends with an oppressive weight upon the spirit. If, as I suppose, the experience of some who read these pages will prevent such a feeling from taking possession of their minds, others may find themselves more

or less embarrassed by it, and unable to determine within themselves whether to bow beneath it, in utter submission, or whether it needs to be corrected and modified by considerations not yet fully discerned. It is at least certain that any attempt to make the season of Lent a reality, that any just description of its nature or enforcement of its duties, will encounter the objection that we are burdening the free spirit of man; that we are making life gloomy, and religion repulsive. In accordance with this prevailing temper on the subject, there are too many who seem to themselves compelled to choose between considering Lent as nothing, or as burdensome.

It is not I that have brought the subject to this point; it is reached under the Church's guidance. She anticipates the difficulty as likely to come out to view with the advance of the season, and deals with it accordingly. Her course of discipline in the earlier part of the season tends to give it force and prominence. Her first call is to sanctify a fast, to bring the bride out of her chamber and the laborer from his toil, to assemble young and old, and the very infants at the breast, and to prostrate all in humiliation before God. Her first week gives us CHRIST in His Temptation, and the Apostles in their trials, for our example; her

second and third bring us to the encounter with sin reigning in our mortal bodies, and show us under what fearful circumstances the struggle must be carried on. As she displays it, we cannot help being more struck at first with the malignity, power, and deadly hold of those who are against us, than with the Person and Office of Him who is for us, and whose appearance is rather reserved till towards the season's close. In the Gospels for the first three Sundays the ministry of Satan is, indeed, confronted and confounded by the Ministry of CHRIST, but the object evidently is to make us feel that Satan *is* a minister of evil to us, and an active and powerful one, so that our apprehensions of ill on that score shall work in with the other elements of the season to impress us with the need of keeping it, no matter at what cost. Just at the moment when our spirits, supposing them to have been thoroughly under such influences, are open to the suggestion that these ideas are too severe and fearful, that the effort to keep Lent is too much for us and this strictness in such duties impossible, that there must be some mistake in a course of discipline which proves so burdensome, and when we look on to the services of the Sunday next following to see if these sombre representations are to be still

continued—we find the secret feeling of our heart anticipated: it is not of duties and of dangers that the Church speaks, but of privileges. In the Epistle for the fourth Sunday in Lent this very idea of bondage, as entering into religion, is treated in St. Paul's words, wherein we read that we, who are thinking it so painful to keep Lent, are children, not of the bondwoman, but of Jerusalem, the free mother of us all. And the Gospel for that day, instead of being another picture of some poor sin-and-Satan-beleaguered soul that cries in desperate misery on the one only Hope of Rescue, shows CHRIST, amid a multitude of attentive disciples, feeding them with the Bread of Life. Thus midway in the season we are provided with timely solace and encouragement; we may ponder over the experience we have gained, and ascertain the true meaning and result of its wholesome discipline.

Midlent Sunday, then, is a token to any one who has thought Lent burdensome, there has been a mistake, not in Lent, indeed, but in himself. It proposes for his consideration the truth, that the proper and intended result of the course through which he has been led is to produce lightness rather than oppression of spirits.

A distinction is to be made, however, between

lightness and levity of spirits. The two words, simply as words, may have the same meaning, but when thus applied they denote two very different conditions of the soul. Lightness is opposed to heaviness of heart, but levity is the reverse of seriousness.

Men differ from each other in this respect by nature as well as by grace, and some are constitutionally more inclined to levity than others. But nature, if left to herself, usually seeks to cast off care, and to be, in the present moment, as mirthful and thoughtless of the future as it is possible to be. That mirror-like smoothness of a perfectly satisfied spirit, bright in its own happy thoughts, and quick to reflect the passage of wit or feeling over its surface—who has it in his nature to deny that such a thing, simply in itself regarded, is beautiful to be seen, and full of pleasure in the possession? Were earth still an Eden, and man's heart the untainted spring of purity, and did the scene of peace lay all around him as it came from the hand of God, the soul that reposed in such serenity, only to take and give back the impressions of the passing hour, would, indeed, be as fitly in place and as lovely to look upon as any lake that, embosomed in that garden, caught the waving of every overhanging leaf, and the quick flight of every bird. But in

this world of sorrow and of sin, a mind that could be, or seem or seek to be, so constituted, would but deceive the eye with a show of attractiveness and beauty. It would have no real correspondence to the clear warm depths of Eden's Lake: its glassy surface would rather testify to the power of the frost that could bind the flow of human passion in such unnatural stillness. There is neither time nor place on this earth for man or woman innocently to take the color of the passing minute, and be perfectly at ease if they can but receive its impressions with a semblance of childlike simplicity. There are too many stern facts ever around us, there should be too many deep thoughts within us, to make it possible for any one to realize this dream of Paradise.

And if it be not possible, on such a principle, safely to abandon one's self to the influences of the hour, what is to be thought of those who study to put gravity and self-recollection aside and surrender themselves to the pettiest impulses of the moment, as though the immortal soul could float hither and thither like a dry leaf upon the current of time? This is genuine levity—to become the sport of circumstances, and make sport for one's self out of them, and so play life away as though it were a game for one's amusement. There are characters to

be met with formed upon this principle, who have a sort of pride, even amid the gravest troubles and calamities, in taking things easy, as they say, and giving care the go-by, as though somehow nothing could touch them. There are others who envy what they call the happy constitution of such men, and wish it were in their own power to maintain a jovial spirit amid the ups and downs of life. Most persons, however, greet such an exhibition with nothing more than a smile, and say of the exhibiter, with a manner more extenuating than their words, that he is a thoughtless fellow, but kindly disposed. It would seem that but a very few really discern and feel how such a spectacle is one of the most fearful which this world presents, for in no other shape does the incongruity between what a man is and what he deems himself to be, do such violence to those mature faculties of head and heart that enter into the very idea of manhood. It is sad enough to see men torn away from their hold on truth and right by the violence of passion; or to watch the sure and gradual influence of some powerful and blinding seduction; or to behold the full and defiant development of the evil which is in the human heart. But of these, some rational account can be given. Passion is imperious and enslaving;

the force of unsuspected attraction is sometimes all but irresistible, and evil beyond a certain point, becomes strong enough openly to tyrannize. These causes, melancholy though they be, are still adequate to account for the corresponding varieties in the character and condition of men. But to be sporting on the brink of eternity, to go laughing to the grave, to be flinging aside like toys the only materials out of which the solid structure of one's eternal peace can be framed, to be losing life and one's own soul and effecting an eternal ruin, where God designed that the noble monument of His redeeming grace should stand forever: to be doing this, without any motive, of no set purpose, without one definite thought or strong feeling, in mere emptiness of spirit, satisfied and pleased to fancy one's self a tinkling cymbal instead of an immortal and accountable being—this is Satan's absolute success in degrading human nature; this is depriving it of every element of strength and making it his plaything; and this is simply levity of spirit, in its present tendency and last result. The merriment which finds its occasion in serious themes, the habitual jesting which sees and seizes only on the ludicrous in the events of life, the desire to be always mirthful, the enforced gayety of manner which is used to

fence off serious thoughts, the eagerness to find entertainment for every day and hour of the day, the insensibility of spirit to the occasional intimations which appear in the most joyous life that there are other realities beneath the surface, the studied recklessness which seeks to blunt and turn aside the edge of care—are all forms of levity, in which men are apt to find the zest of life, or the antidote to its bitterness, but by means of which at length they destroy all correspondence between the shape that life assumes, and the facts and truths by which its issue is determined. They render inevitable the dissipation of their dream of life by the contrast with its terrible reality.

Here then we see in what the inherent evil of levity consists: why the wise man discards and the Christian strictly represses it. It has no agreement with the facts of his condition. It assumes that he exists amid circumstances not one of which is real, but the very reverse of which is soon to be apparent.

Here, too, we have the source, unalterably fixed, out of which the temper of our mind, if it be not an utter delusion, must assuredly proceed. We ascertain the only principle on which we can frame for ourselves a character that shall have substance, when the vanities of earth shall pass away forever.

It is the first law of wisdom, and the essential principle of our well-being, to conform our minds faithfully to the known facts of our condition. One state of mind may in itself be far preferable to another, but if it be not warranted by the circumstances in which we are placed, what possible solace of a momentary delusion can compensate for the certain and enduring disappointment, when we find that our short-lived peace was groundless, and that we are unprepared for the reality? No doubt it is pleasanter to pass our days in mirth and joyfulness rather than in gloom. There is no one who would not choose, if he could, to dwell only amid thoughts that promote cheerfulness, satisfaction with self, and contentment with every thing and everybody. But these are emotions that depend upon what and where we are. What doth it profit to say to the hungry, be ye fed, and to the naked, be ye clothed, if we give them not those things that are needful for the body? What doth it profit to say to our own spirit, be happy, be free from care, be what pleases you best, if the elements of such a condition be not provided for us in the constitution of both the inner and outer world? To know what we are and where we are, may, perhaps, tend only to heaviness of spirit; but better that, with the

assurance that at least we are not deceived, and can intelligently avail ourselves of every opportunity of amending our condition, than by acting in ignorance, or in contradiction to our knowledge, to incur the curse of levity of spirit, which only gives to the present a hollow joy, and takes all hope away from the future.

On this principle the discipline of CHRIST is ordered, which the Church carries out in the season of Lent. Let us at least know beyond question what sort of beings we really are, and what is the fruit of our lives past. Let us understand our own position in the universe of God, to what regions we are tending, and who are our companions as we move onwards towards Eternity.

Our enumeration of these essential features and main circumstances of our existence, may be ever so brief and comprehensive, ever so cautiously and moderately worded in order not to excite exaggerated feeling—it will nevertheless prove to be a very awful catalogue. We are called upon to go over it, point by point, as an exercise always wholesome, but specially suitable for the season of self-renouncement and humiliation before God. The mind is dull, the heart is cold, indeed, on which it makes but little or no impression. Our own exceeding sinfulness, its many griev-

ous exhibitions in time past, and its promptness to seize the least opportunity at present; the shortness of our time of trial; death ever imminent, and judgment sure to follow; the uncertainty of what the result will be; Satan ceaselessly laboring for our ruin; CHRIST as constant in the proffers of His grace, and the decision between them, in some mysterious manner left to our own weak unreliable selves; these are but a part of the fearful facts that never for one moment cease to be, or lose their terrible significance for each one of us, and that after they are once seen can never for one moment be lost sight of! What else has earth or time to put by their side, that shall divide attention with them? Build houses and cities, and people them with your busy toil and magnificence, and decorate them with your art, and fill them with the shows of life, O fellow-mortals! but we only see how fast your lives are wasting, and how much more busy even than you is the enemy of souls; how your work plays into his hands, and how speedily the end for us, and for you, and for him, is coming on. The consciousness of these things unnerves our hands for earthly toil: what is there worth our laboring for? it cuts us off from your amusements: shall we laugh when your and our

calamity comes? it weighs our spirits to the earth, for what of natural elasticity can remain, or what can this earth or this mortal life provide as a counterbalance, when the shadows of death are falling round us, and our limbs tremble as they bear us on to confront the Accuser, before the judgment-seat of CHRIST?

Such would be the language of the believer's heart, who, seeing these most certain facts of his mortal condition, should then be left to form his own judgment upon them, and determine his feelings and conduct for himself. Let the facts of sin and Satan, of an earthly probation to be encountered only by the aid of Divine grace which yet may be forfeited, of Death and Judgment, and of Eternal Life thereon depending, be given to men, without further instruction, and, unless they deny their intelligence, they must assuredly sink into a depressed and sorrowful state of mind. Their only alternative would be to force their minds away from such thoughts, and to exercise a compulsory cheerfulness; but this would be levity, not only unlawful, but in itself more wretched than any gloom they might otherwise experience. However dark and deep that gloom might be, it would at least be accordant with their real condition, and prepare for its issue.

Such would be our condition had there never been a Lent appointed, and had no discipline been ordained, on the principles which this season commends to us. Were all who profess and call themselves Christians as ignorant in fact, as many of them are in theory and name, of the principles on which we observe a Lenten season, they would now be groaning beneath the unrelieved burden of a knowledge of facts which are in themselves too severe and weighty for the mind of man to bear. There is but one way in which such knowledge can be supported, and in which the spirit that has felt the dismal weight of such facts can recover its tone. It is the way which the Church would teach us perfectly, would we but receive her teaching in faithful and honest hearts.

From week to week she presses this instruction upon us. It may seem repulsive at the outset, but there is no part of religion which, on close consideration, is fuller of comfort. Let it be regarded in its connection with the great fact of the existence of sin in the world, and in our own hearts. Let it be regarded in its connection with that great fact out of which the need of such a season grows, and from which it takes its distinctive character—the existence, namely, of the sinful principle in our own bosoms, and of Satanic power exter-

nal to us, but co-working with the evil within, for the irremediable injury of our souls. Lent, indeed, renders this fact a source of greater anxiety than ever, but at the same time it teaches us no longer to cower in slavish fear beneath it, but to search out its secret principle under its various forms; to ascertain the extent of its dominion, and to subject our souls to vigorous and systematic treatment with a view to our final freedom. The same remark may be made of all the ills which afflict our mortal state; of all the trials through which we are ordained to pass. Lent brings our minds close up to them—not to increase the vague fears of a partially instructed mind, but that in their place we may substitute a definite and intelligent apprehension of the trials that are coming on us. It carries us over a survey of our condition, that we may form a plan of procedure, and begin at once the work of restoration. It puts the instruments of our labor in our hands: fasting, self-denial, self-examination, retirement from the world, and increase of devotion. It commends the examples of the Apostles to us. It joins us to the fellowship of our LORD.

When it has done all this, has it thrown no light upon the dark problem of sin, temptation, and death? When it has shown us how the

very facts that pertain unavoidably to our condition and that in themselves are so depressing, may be made the special occasions, by CHRIST's ordinance in His Church, of rising above their power, has it done nothing to animate and cheer us? When, going contrary to nature, it has taught us how to grapple with evils to which nature could only succumb, does it not impart a sense of relief that is beyond all other satisfactions? By studying our weakness, to gain strength; by humbling ourselves, to gain the power to rise; by denying ourselves, to get the mastery of our own will; by closer scrutiny of the causes and forms of our evils, to discern a way of escape from them; by fidelity to all the various opportunities of spiritual gain which the season affords, to become more alive to the grace that is vouchsafed to us and the hope that is set before us, and to learn a calmer and fuller confidence in the course of His Providence who is working good to all His creatures out of this perplexed world of trial and misery—by making progress in any or all of these and various other ways which are laid open to us, we surely shall feel our hearts glowing within us, and our spirits lightened of their load. Thus we shall reap our reward for having faith that the ways of God in His Church are

pleasanter than any courses which nature could point out, and the narrow and direct paths of Lenten discipline more peaceful than the broad wanderings among this world's aimless indulgences.

It may well, then, be maintained that the discipline of Lent is never wearisome or oppressive, to one whose eyes are open to the realities of the scene in which he is placed. On the contrary, to a mind so enlightened it brings relief from the sense of the surrounding evils. To see nothing and feel nothing of the fearful ills which afflict mankind, to be unconscious or regardless of all that in this world interferes with gayety of spirit, would, indeed, render one for the time independent of a penitential season, and of any thoughts connected with it. But the utter variance of such a state of mind with the facts of our mortal condition, the miserable hollowness of the peace that would be so obtained, must assuredly render it undesirable in the estimation of any one who does not abandon himself to the merest levity. To him therefore who understands—even though it be but partially, who considers—even though it be but occasionally, and who feels, if not deeply, yet truly, what this present life is in its relations to the Unseen and the Future, there is but one possible alter-

native to levity, in which he can find the antidote to the despondency and gloom which is the merely natural tendency and result of his condition. He must accept that condition as a discipline. He must submit to the restraint which it imposes upon his natural freedom, in full faith that it will work to his advantage. He must open his soul to the sobering and subduing influences of the stern facts and truths which are around him, and learn, with patient docility, as a disciple of CHRIST, how to profit by them. So doing, the system under which he lives will become intelligible. Trials will no longer seem strange. The yoke of CHRIST's moral and spiritual precepts, not worn by a stubborn neck, will be easy. The burden of self-distrustful thoughts and self-denying purposes will be light. And the unquenchable and ever-growing hope which has been kindled in his bosom, will throw its cheerful rays along every path in which Religion leads him; however unattractive it may appear to his natural taste, until at last he meets and is surrounded by the brightening sky of the perfect and Eternal Day.

Since the season brings us to this point, and presents our whole life, as Christians, in this aspect, is it to be spoken of as gloomy and repulsive? Are our hearts to shrink from it

as though it were giving up all the joys of life? This resolute self-possession of the mind, this calm of the soul that is prepared for the worst of mortal changes, this deep-seated gladness of heart in the anticipation of the end of trials, moderated by the sense that such trials have their present use and are therefore to be fairly and fully made use of—are we to esteem all this less than the ability to eat, drink, and be merry, and to take our ease in this world, according to our natural taste? If, unhappily, any man be so minded, let him plainly say, I choose pleasure in this form rather than in the other—but let him not affirm that he is driven to that choice as the only way of having any pleasure at all. He has only shown his own preference of one kind of pleasure over another. He has preferred the scantiest measure of happiness that was within his reach, to the free proffer of its measureless abundance. He has seen the sunlight flashing on the shallow stream of earthly joy, and has heard the merry tinkling of its waters, and has hastened thither, where, at the most, he can but dip in a hand or foot for momentary refreshment, when he might have committed himself to the Ocean of that peace which is unfathomable, and which can upbear and carry forward to Eternity every interest of body, soul, and spirit.

IX.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD.

THERE can be no room to doubt that he who seeks happiness in the only way, in which, as we have seen, he can provide for the imperious exigencies of his earthly estate, will daily grow more assured of the wisdom of his choice. The last thing he will be likely to part with, after a short experience of it, will be the inward sense that he is secure from falling into this world's short delusive dream of joy; that he is gradually drawing near to that bliss which, when once begun, will be measureless in its depth and duration. Any sort of pleasure will satisfy a man—if he can forget every thing else. But there is the difficulty. There is an end coming, and men see it and fear it beforehand. These apprehensions of the future, troublesome to the worldly spirit, are yet the surest tokens of its immortality. The least religious man, who values his intelligence, will not willingly pay the cost of removing them from his sight. It is only the votary of pleasure who is content to make himself a bigger sort

of insect, and live in and for the present moment. A *real* man would rather taste the bitterness of the future in his cup, than have no future. So that, whatever enables him to face it, and to feel that he has provided for his reaching it in safety through whatever temporary distresses, enables him to be twice the man he was before. He is conscious that his existence has expanded beyond the limits of the present. Although in this perishable body still, he feels himself already an immortal.

When he subjects himself to Christian training, however, that he may attain this most desirable condition, he is not merely entering one of the obvious and intelligible varieties of human life. This fact needs distinct consideration, to guard him against misapprehension at the outset, and disappointment in the result.

The life which engages him in the duties of Lent, and teaches him to find a peculiar and lasting pleasure in them, is not a natural state, but is that life which St. Paul says is hid with CHRIST in GOD.

There are two points to be guarded in making such a statement as this. The one is, that such language shall not get beyond the range of our sympathies, and present the idea of a condition of mind in which it may seem impossible for ordinary Christians, surrounded by

common cares, to participate. The other is that, in the attempt to show that ordinary Christians, surrounded by common cares, may lead a life to which such language is applied, we do not vulgarize or dissipate the idea, and obscure the fact, that a life hid with CHRIST in God, is essentially different from and immeasurably above the life that is natural to fallen man.

My main reliance to prevent the subject from being so misapprehended, and to guard against these two extremes, must simply be to place them thus distinctly before the reader, with the assurance that we should be falling into error were we to find ourselves verging towards either extreme. To enter more largely into the discussion of this part of my subject, would be converting into a treatise a mere essay which only seeks to be suggestive of thoughts, the full range of which extends far beyond the limits here described. With this brief caution, let us approach the proposition itself, so simple in terms, yet so profound in meaning.

The life of religion is not a natural state, but is hidden with CHRIST in God.

First, it is not a natural state—but this does not imply that it has nothing or little in common with the life that men naturally lead. It

is by nature that men live in families and constitute society among themselves; that they create forms of business, and regulate the modes in which the daily affairs of life shall be carried on. It is natural that in their lives should be seen the influence of taste, of interest, and of affection. Now a man is not required, by the religion we speak of, to throw himself out of this system, or to go violently contrary to it. It is the mould in which his outward life is cast, as well as the life of his neighbors. As a matter of course, he engages in the business which is his choice or worldly necessity; he selects his pleasures according to his opportunity; he lives where and does what he pleases in conformity with the usages of his day and nation. There may be a variety of particulars, some of them of the utmost importance, wherein a difference will be found between him and other men, attributable solely to his religion; but such, in general, is the similarity between his life and theirs. He is a man among his fellow-men, largely contributing to and largely drawing upon the common stock of human interests and affections.

So that, we do not discover what in him is foreign to the natural condition of his kind, in any isolation of himself from them. He neither dwells, solitarily, in the deserts, nor lives

in a separate community of congenial minds refusing all intercourse with the world, nor works his own spirit up to a singular pitch of fanaticism, inhabiting an exalted and imaginary world of his own, that renders the common relations of life spiritless and repulsive. Nothing of all this is seen in him. Considered in reference to these points, he is one of the most natural of men. He accepts his lot heartily, wherever God has cast it. He looks round, in simplicity of purpose, for his daily duties and his daily pleasures. He affects no loftiness of mannér or of feeling, as though he were above such ordinary matters. He is scrupulously careful to meet all their requirements, and passes all his days, if so it be ordered, contentedly amid them.

And yet, all the while, the indications have been neither few, nor concealed, nor insignificant, that he has been living in a state that was not according to his earthly nature. That very exactness of living for which he was observable, that strict regulation of his life to avoid offence and fulfil his obligations in all things great and small, was not the suggestion of his own mind, nor did he learn it from the example of the multitude. That unobtrusive following of custom in indifferent matters, making it thus far his rule, joined with that jealous

measuring of custom by God's rule of right, and that unbending adherence to the latter when the former departed from it, was not the spirit which the world taught him. That moderation and evenness of temper amid the crowd of objects which on earth appeal to human hopes and fears, was not a natural quality. That obvious arrangement of his life with reference to a centre neither visible, nor of this world, so that the very things that were common to him and to his fellow-mortals in their earthly condition, were grouped differently by him, and changed in all their bearings—what other men put near by and prominent, being just seen upon the outer circle in his distribution of them—this was in accordance with no natural dictate. And if so different from others, in common matters, what of his estimate of spiritual things? of sacraments and religious observances, and other means of grace? of moral, spiritual, and religious principles and precepts, and their application to his daily conduct? what of his giving money freely to the needs of others instead of hoarding it, or spending it upon himself? what of his denying himself lawful pleasures? what of his undertaking labors without hope of earthly reward, in the face of worldly advantage to the detriment of his present ease? What of all that difference

which is discernible in so many forms to the eye of his fellow-men, and in which they see that he, the man of business, the sociable neighbor, the kind friend, the genial companion, the good citizen, is yet so unlike themselves. And what of his secret hours, when he searches out his own conscience, and lays his own heart bare, and struggles with himself, and tells the trouble of his mind and the desire of his soul, as though One were there not greater in power than full of love and pity, to see him and to hear him. There is nothing natural in all this: nothing for which nature can find an adequate motive, or of which she can give a reasonable account. It is to her mere loss of time and opportunity. Some parts of it, indeed, are less distasteful than others, and in one or two points she may own something like a positive sympathy—but as a whole, as one consistent course of life tending to form one compact character, it is foreign to her tastes, contrary to her inclinations, and beyond her strength. Such is her relation to it before the marvellous change is wrought, by which the Grace of God reconciles us to things which were at first strange or repulsive, and brings out the latent correspondence between the wants and capacities of the human soul, and that Religion which

can satisfy every want, and develop every capacity.

We proceed, however, a step further in the subject as it lies before us.

This life, which religion inspires and controls, is a hidden one. It does not depart, in its general form, from the ordinary course of human life. In many special points, moreover, wherein it is dissimilar, it is open to observation: the difference can be marked. And yet, for all that, it is hidden from the eye of man, and open only in the sight of God.

The force of this truth will be apprehended the more readily, if two varieties of character be compared together that are frequently met with in the world.

There is one class of men of whom it is the common saying, that they live out of themselves. They live in the incidents that are hourly happening around them. They frequent society, and are eager for the current news. They are always seeking for some external object on which to employ their minds. Their existence is made up of where they have been, whom they have seen, what they have heard, and what they have done. Their history would be completely written when each of these points had been fully narrated. Of their communing with self nothing can be said;

they had no time left for it. They never were alone, if they could help it, or if alone, never failed to carry on the intercourse of the day which left its lively recollections as the food of waking thoughts, and the staple of their dreams. It is no secret what they have lived for. Every one understands them. There is no mystery in their case. They are open as the day. Let them miss this spectacle; withhold from them a piece of information which every one else possesses; cut them off from their share of what is going on, and you can estimate exactly how much of life they are deprived of. It exists for them in outward things like these.

In contrast with such persons is another class, who live within themselves. They are not necessarily reserved or silent or retiring people, but they do not make talking a business, or court the public gaze. They say what is proper. They do what becomes them. They appear when occasion calls for it. But the very fact that they manifest an independence of these things, is the token that there is an inner life in which they find the true zest of their existence. They are conscious of the world of thought and feeling that is included in their own bosom. Its changes possess an interest that nothing can surpass. Here they look for

the effects that are to them the measures of the real value of outward events. What thoughts are in their own minds, what emotions are in their own hearts, determine for them the amount of their happiness or misery, and neither in mind nor heart can they merely reflect the thoughts and emotions of those with whom they happen to meet. The sources of pleasure and of pain are too deep within them to be subject to such transient influences. They cannot explain to others what is going on within their minds. No one can comprehend it but themselves. To no one else can it have the all-absorbing interest which it has to them. And so they keep to themselves the true secret of their being, and live a life that is hidden from the world.

This kind of life in this class of persons *may* be very selfish and irreligious, but it will serve to show that the idea of a hidden life is not peculiar to religion, and is not to be regarded as strange and almost impossible to be realized. It is actually developed in the experience of mankind. It is true that in the estimation of the majority of persons, the outward form which life assumes is about the whole of it. To live means, with them, to be in a certain position, with certain accompaniments in the shape of property, acquaintance, and reputation. But there is a

deeper view of it than this, which many a mere worldly man prefers to take, and which the Christian *must* take, if he be faithful to his calling. The principles on which life is led constitute its essence and true substance. Its kind and worth is determined by the idea which it embodies in the outward shape of words and deeds. To live is to think, to feel, to form a character, to have, in moral and spiritual qualities, a distinct, consistent, individual existence. Selfishness and pride may be the animating principles of such a life, and wrap it from the observation of mankind in impenetrable reserve. But far different and holier causes will produce in the Christian a similar result. His life will be a hidden one, not in selfish isolation, or proud self-reliance, and self-approval—nor yet in mere semblance, or profession, but in the strength which sustains it; in the foretaste of heavenly joy which animates it; in the indescribable and incommunicable sense of pleasure and advantage found in ways so contrary to all that in nature's eyes promises either pleasure or advantage; the silent and gradual formation of a character unlike any which nature by herself could produce, for which no proper place is provided in this world's system, and which cannot expand in full maturity and

beauty until it is transferred to the Paradise of God.

As our nature is now constituted, this life of the soul in CHRIST is not natural. Self is another name for nature, but self-restraint, self-conflict, and self-mastery are tokens and results of the reality of the soul's life. As the world is now constituted this life must be hidden. Who can observe the growth of the soul? Who but the man himself can tell what is the efficacy of these various modes of discipline which religion prescribes? Can he even ascertain it himself in all cases? And where but in the Book of God's Remembrance will even be written that which his own memory must fail to retain—the various workings of conscience, the searchings of heart, the prayers and sudden ejaculations, the wholesome thoughts that his various trials have suggested, the comfort and encouragement which in manifold ways and measures were dealt out to him, the providential occurrences that came together unexpectedly and soon passed over, and all the minute incidents of his life as a disciple of CHRIST, that made their due impression on his soul and helped to hide that life in Him who will manifest it, in the day when all secrets shall be revealed.

This, then, is the position of members of the

Church when Lent comes. They enter upon a season which, if it means any thing, means very much that is not discerned by the multitude of men, or felt even by those who profess to keep it as it should be. They endeavor to consider it faithfully in its positive duties, and in accordance with the general principles of religion which it inculcates. They look upon the whole of life on earth from this point of view, and they perceive the difference between the prospect, as it thus lies before them, and as they approach it from the side of nature and the world. The first impression may be, that the two have nothing in common. The substance of life, the reality of existence, may seem to be there where are found the material part of life and its natural ties, however impressively other ideas may be set forth, however truly those ideas may appear under the awful sanction of Religion. The conscience and the heart may consent to the instructions which are appropriate to the season, but the practical difficulty will be to reconcile the course so pointed out with the actual necessities of a life as mortal men, on this material earth, in this vast system of a world that seems to be established on other principles and conducted in quite a contrary spirit. But the resolution of this difficulty is found in the single sentence, the

meaning of which I have attempted to illustrate—the life of the soul is hidden. Two sorts of lives are possible. Men are everywhere leading the one or the other—the inner or the outer life. The Christian's outer life is not so different from that of others as to separate him wholly from their society: yet it has its peculiarities which are not of nature, and which indicate less of nature still in his inner life. He finds the true substance of this to be in the principles, the thoughts and feelings, and the purposes, with which he serves God in CHRIST; in the motives with which he obeys the rules and observes the ordinances of religion. He thus creates an atmosphere for himself through which all outward objects take a peculiar and distinctive coloring, and he discovers objects, the reality of which is independent of visible things and unaffected by the changes of time and earthly circumstances. These constitute his world. They are to him what the bright sunlight, and the accustomed sights and sounds of earth are every morning to the waking eye and ear of the natural man. They assure him that he is alive. But it is an assurance incommunicable to others—his own private evidence and proof, of a life concealed within the shell of the

outward forms of his ordinary life. Its hopes and joys, the changing incidents which compose its history, and with which the world cannot meddle, are the all in all of his existence.

X.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE CHEERFUL IN CHRIST'S
FELLOWSHIP.

I HAVE already had occasion to observe that the principles embodied in the season of Lent are not restricted in their operation to the actual number of days during which it lasts. Lent is not a time by itself, so differing in its nature from all the rest of the year as to be widely contrasted with it. It is but a concentration of the spirit and manner of life which becomes a Christian during the whole term of his days on earth. Life itself, in certain substantial respects, is to be regarded as one long Lent, in preparation for that which has no length, for it is measureless and eternal—the Life of the Resurrection.

This idea, indeed, entered largely into the substance of the previous section. The course of the subject we have been engaged with brought us to the truth that the characteristics of Lent are, in fact, essential features of the religious life—the life which, if left to ourselves, we would not choose; for which, as

we are born into the world, we have neither taste nor ability ; which, in contrast with the life that finds its principles and its motives in the concerns of time and the system of this visible world, is hidden with CHRIST in God.

There is comfort for those who are disposed to take it, in thus perceiving that Lent does not come to an end with the forty days. Very few persons make the best use of the season. Very few are as faithful in its observance as, before it comes, they wish, or mean to be. Some, perhaps, will be making up their minds in regard to it while it is passing over, and before they have concluded on the manner in which it ought to be kept, they find it nearly at an end. In one way or another so many rules of discipline are broken through, so many opportunities neglected, so very feeble a resistance presented to the intrusive demands of the world, so many times when, just for once only, allowance is made for omitting or slackly performing a special duty of the season, so little felt of the power of that spirit which filled the Apostle who ran not as uncertainly, and fought not as beating the air, and with whose words and example the Church introduces the season, that if the whole of its profit is to be only what may be gained immediately within its limits, it will add comparatively little

to our attainments; it will make but a small difference in our character; it will be the token of a Lent lost, rather than used as it was designed to be. There is good reason for thankfulness, then, that we are not so soon compelled to make up the sum of the benefit which we obtain from Lent; that we can carry on its work, and prolong its spirit, if not with all the advantages which are afforded us in the few weeks that hasten on, yet with opportunities that will present themselves at every step of our ordinary course, and that we shall have learned to value rightly. It will be wise, therefore, to make sure of this one impression which the thoughtful consideration of the matter will deepen in our minds—that the spirit of Lent is to be diffused throughout our life; that our character is to take tone from it. Then, indeed, though we may reproach ourselves for our remissness in many positive duties, we shall feel that we have learned a lesson that must have results in all time to come; that a season is not altogether lost which serves for the date of such impressions, and that what we have lost may yet, in some measure, be redeemed. With this thought and purpose in our hearts, our comfort will be, not that the weary days of self-restraint are over, but that we see the way in which this blessed work of spiritual

discipline may be perpetuated, as long as life itself on earth shall last.

Is this too high a spirit to be shown even by members of the Church of CHRIST? Is it too difficult a thought to be entertained by them, as a controlling one, in all their days to come? When they consider the ideas which are contained in the very fact of the institution of such a season, and some of which I have here sought to unfold, and which are grouped together in the Christian's survey of his future life on earth, do they hesitate to face them? Let them further consider, over and above the general force of these truths, what special helps and motives are provided to be more than adequate to any need of the soul. Let them think of the association of these truths with that Sacred Being who is the centre of all Revelation. Let them ask whence is to proceed the heat of love and zeal that should glow in their hearts; the unwonted strength of soul to rise and be sustained henceforth so far above the level of a sensual and earthly existence.

All the thoughts appropriate to the season are absorbed at last in the emotions excited by the single idea of our Blessed Saviour's Cross and Passion. All the exercises of penitence are merged in the contemplation of His sufferings, and in the acts of devotion which such a

scene suggests. Approaching it, each one from his own quarter, and making every step in the approach, each one affected in his own way by the ideas that have come before him, the whole company of the faithful are gathered at last at this one point, to receive the same communication of that grace which may be expected to flow from CHRIST upon the Cross. It is the grace of CHRIST, of fellowship with Him, and of participation in His hope.

It is the grace of CHRIST.

No wonder, then, that the course of Lenten instruction gets beyond the range of our natural ideas, and unfolds to us a principle and mode of life, for a sufficient motive of which we search in vain in the ordinary impulses of the human heart, and of which we see no examples in the common life of mortal man. What can be looked for in a mode of existence, the sole support of which is the grace of such a being as CHRIST was? If we single out some eminent instance among our fellow-men of a life sustained by one all-controlling principle, and devoted to one object, and if we suppose ourselves put in training to become the disciples and co-laborers of such a one, we understand forthwith how wide must be our departure from the ways of the throng who spread themselves without purpose over

any space that may be open to their roving feet. We glance along the path that is so pointed out, and view its solitary course, its steep ascents, its ruggedness and toil, and unless we absolutely decline to enter upon it, we brace ourselves forthwith for the demands which imagination heightens in their extent and severity, and which we are sure the enterprise will make upon us. It is thus that men every day brace themselves to be worthy followers of those who have led the toilsome way to eminence in Art or Science or Letters, and are not daunted because such a life to be successful must be separated from all other ends, and wholly given up to this. They invoke the spirit of great men departed to nerve their souls for the arduous undertaking. It is the love of art, or the thirst for knowledge, or the desire of fame that supports them. Every thing agrees therewith—the expectations which others form concerning them; their own experience; the change which is gradually wrought in their own souls. And when, in the place of influences like these, another Name is substituted, indicative of its own peculiar spirit, its own attainments, its own principles and methods, surely it is no more than what every one looks for, that they who own that Name should submit to have it stamped upon their charac-

ters and lives in strict accordance with its own distinct significance and power.

The Name of CHRIST—what does it signify? the grace of CHRIST—what is its power? It is the object of Lent to prepare the Christian to comprehend better than ever the meaning of that worthy Name whereby he is called. The discipline to which he is urged to submit himself, has directly in view the reduction of his natural perversity beneath the reforming energy of the grace that can make him like to Him from whom it proceeds. Will it render him another man, indeed, than what he naturally is? That it will do so, cannot seem strange to one who knows wherein Christ differed from all others whom mankind have taken for their guides. Can he venture to make a beginning of so great a change in any reasonable confidence that he will be supported to the end? His support will be that grace which is commensurate with his need—and which is only the power put in action to sustain his soul, which was able to create his soul. The Grace of CHRIST will assuredly be sufficient to bear up even the feeblest among believers, in his sincere endeavor to take up the Cross as the symbol of his life henceforth. For the communication of that grace, the season which instructs us in the life that is crucified to this

world, assembles the entire company of the Faithful before CHRIST Himself upon the Cross.

As much reason as we have for being Christians at all, so much have we for forming the purpose of living after the particular manner thus described. The foundation of our confidence is the sufficiency of CHRIST's power to sustain us. Considering this a settled matter, however, it leaves us still to ask whether any and what special attraction can possibly be found in a mode of life which, however assured of support, seems, nevertheless, at first sight singularly destitute of power to draw the heart to its self-denial, and reconcile the taste to its severities.

It is by the grace of fellowship with CHRIST, that the secret is imparted of finding pleasure in a life which, in certain real respects, is separated from the world, and hidden from the sympathy and comprehension of the rest of mankind.

Now, what does this mean? In what respect is this phrase, fellowship with CHRIST, a reality, and not a mere phrase—one of those high-sounding sentences, with which it is deemed pious to cheat the ear, though nothing corresponding to it ever enters the heart? Fellowship with CHRIST! He is in Heaven and we

are on earth. He is the mighty God, and we are feeble men. His thoughts and the pleasure of His Being are ineffable; their range is throughout eternity; their source and principle is in the unfathomable depths of His Divine Nature: our minds are circumscribed by what we experience on earth, and in the enumeration of this short life's petty occasions, the variety and sum of our emotions is exhausted. What real fellowship can there be between us and Him?

But true though all this be that is said of His vast superiority to our poor selves, it should never hide from us the grander truth, that our measures of great and small are not to be applied to His thoughts concerning any of His creatures. As the work of His own Hands, the least thing that He has made is a fit subject for His Divine regards. His pleasure so to regard it, gives it a greatness which it has not in itself. If we add to this idea of His relation to His creatures, that of the tie which he has formed between Himself and that portion of His creation whom He has redeemed from the power of Sin and of Death, we shall more readily perceive the ground on which the truth is rested, that a fellowship may exist between CHRIST the Redeemer, and the souls whom he has redeemed, which

realizes the literal force of the word "fellowship," though the difference between his estate in Heaven and theirs on earth be greater than words can express.

For it must be considered that, in the process of effecting that redemption, He became partaker of our flesh and blood; and further, that He is represented as retaining in that glorified condition to which He returned after He had tasted the suffering of death, the full remembrance of His sorrows, and the living sympathies of a manhood that was subjected to such trials, and knew by experience all the griefs that can oppress the human heart. Such is Christ our Lord in Heaven! Such is He, moment by moment, as in every generation and in each individual life the pulsations of the heart beat time to the ever-varying experience of our earthly condition. He ever liveth to make intercession for us, from an ever-living consciousness of the infirmity that needs the pleadings in its behalf of genuine sympathy.

But can that sympathy be all on one side? Does not the very term convey the idea of its mutual exercise? Can CHRIST be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and we not be moved by a sense of His sorrows? The mind rejects the idea of so unnatural a rela-

tion. No one could allow himself to think that a mere indifferent spectator of the Cross and Passion of his Saviour, or a mere confident and cool reckoner on the feeling which that Saviour had towards him, would ever realize the effects of a tenderness that is infinitely rich in blessings towards those by whom it is reciprocated. No, truly: though it be infinite tenderness on one side and but partial affection the other, the tie of sympathy must exist for the communication of mercy and grace. The compassionate and yearning heart of the Divine Master must confirm the appeal of the disciple, sensitive both to his own frailness and his own sincerity—"Lord, thou knowest all things; THOU KNOWEST that I love Thee!"

Where this love exists, and the disciple is conscious of such a tie between his Master and himself, there will be formed a fellowship between them, as real as any that can be formed between man and man. It is not a fellowship in words or fancies, nor a fellowship of transient feelings; but that only which is truly such, when the same views are taken of the same objects, when under similar circumstances the conduct is the same, when the inclinations tend together to the same occupations and the same enjoyments. Our Lord lived on

this earth with human ties, in every respect a Man, having wants as we have them of body and of soul, drawn towards some objects and repelled by others, occupying a place in this visible world, choosing His proper way of filling it, and completing the term of his days in most exact consistency with His character, His words, and His appointed work on earth. Though every element of a transparent and intelligible life was here, yet His life was hidden from the world, because He made His outward and temporal wants wholly subservient to higher needs; because He heeded not attractions that were merely external; because He chose to live for a purpose that was not included in this world's list of desirable things; because He rigidly pursued the line that ran towards the end He had in view. He therefore endured the life-long contradiction of the world, and the Cross to which it brought Him, despising the shame of being in this world's estimation, uncongenial, repulsive, vile—an outcast to be gotten rid of, if possible, in any way.

The disciple of CHRIST, at a great distance behind his Master, it is true, yet substantially amid these same surroundings, has the opportunity of having the same mind that was in Him, and of showing the same front towards the

world. The consciousness of this, the sense that he is placed where his Saviour was, that these attractions by which he is drawn are the same as CHRIST despised, that these affronts and crosses are the same as He endured, steadies his spirit to meet them in the same way. The thought that, instead of only carrying out his own ideas of congruity and fitness in gratifying his fond remembrance of his LORD, he is actually establishing the living sympathy with Him which, in similar circumstances between man and man, shows itself in the clasped hand and the full encounter of speaking eyes, but which, between the Believer and his Divine Redeemer has its own unutterable modes of intercommunication,—this thought tells him instantly how real is the fellowship into which his Lord receives him. Whereas enfeebled nature at first shrinks from the life that bears the stamp of the Cross, he finds that a spiritual taste is gradually formed for which such a life has joys superior to all others. And when his fellow-men ply him with plausible reasonings about its folly, its impracticability, or its unnaturalness, he feels that they talk of what they do not understand, and that their words hardly touch the surface of his mind.

If all that I have thus written be but words

of truth and soberness, as many a benever can vouch them to be from his own experience, it would seem that they contain enough to supply motives of controlling force why we should walk in that way of true peace and everlasting joy, to which the season points us. A consideration still remains, however, to make the measure of inducements fuller than the utmost wants of the most reluctant or hesitating spirit. To the firm assurance that the strength we need will be supplied in CHRIST, to the constraining power of His love that joins us to His fellowship, and renders it a pleasure deeper than any that can be known in any other way to live on earth in some degree as He did, and as it draws down His blessings on the soul that we should live—to all this must be added the participation of the same life, of the same eternal joy, which comforted and sustained Him in His trials, and which will, therefore, prove more effectual still for our encouragement whose trials, at the sharpest, are so much less than His. “He, for the joy set before Him, endured the Cross.” There is but one point in regard to this aspect of the case upon which I will remark. The greatness of the life of never-ending joy in Heaven, which is thus made to counterbalance the weight of earthly trials and of Christian discipline, is immediately

obvious. If in all its force it be not felt, at least it must be seen that there is incalculable power in that stimulus which is imparted to the duly sensitive spirit, through its participation in the very hope that ministered unimaginable solace to the soul of our Saviour. Not of this, however, need I speak, for we cannot omit to give it due consideration. But let us be sure that we take one thing into account in adding this last motive to the many that have gone before, viz., that the hope of the joy before Him, agreed with the tears which our Saviour wept at the grave of Lazarus, with His groaning in spirit over the contradictions He met with from the world, with the agony of His soul when He prayed that the Cup of His Trial might pass from Him. Herein it is that the participation in His Hope is a grace which specially answers to our condition, when we strive to lead His life amid the temptations of this world. It is a hope born amid weeping, cherished amid trials, and seeming ever to grow brighter in contrast with them. It lives sometimes, like the spark in ashes, the only thing alive amid the dead residuum of the fiery trials that have tried the soul. But it is unquenchable. The Breath of the LORD shall kindle it. Trials upon trials may be heaped over it; the dampening effect of oft-renewed discouragements may

be applied to the utmost; all the rubbish of this world's vanities may be piled above it, but when the pile is highest and hope seems most overlaid and effectually put out, through the heated mass the living flame shall dart, utterly consuming all with which the world thought to bury hope forever, and in one bright instant her long expectation shall be gloriously and immeasurably fulfilled. CHRIST Himself as we now adore Him, is the pledge that this shall be. Never was man nearer that despair which consists in the utter loss of hope, than He; yet He is now in bliss and glory so high that it is almost impossible to regard Him as being still a man. This is His hope fulfilled—the very same, however, that is ours, and which, though in our case waiting for fulfilment, is equally “sure and steadfast.” Earth's darkness is about us, its storms roll over us, but we hold securely by our “anchor within the veil.”

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

INTEGRITY THE BELIEVER'S HOPE AND END.

ST. JAMES i. 4.

“Perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

If you do not remember at once the connection of these words with the rest of the sentence to which they belong, you will naturally think that they must refer to something heavenly or divine. What is there upon earth that can be spoken of in this manner? The condition of the angels in Heaven, the happiness which is promised to the faithful hereafter, may be said, with truth, to be complete. Their character, their occupations, their enjoyment are without any drawback or defect. They exist in the full integrity of their being—perfect creatures, perfectly happy.

Or you may suppose that the words of the text refer to absolute perfection, and, in that case, they will raise your thoughts to the One Infinite Being, who is the original source of all excellence, and the sole standard of all that is relatively perfect among His creatures. It

must be God himself, you will say, whom the Apostle here contemplates, and whom he describes as "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

You will need to be reminded, then, of the clear and forcible context of these words, before it can occur to you that they are applied, neither to God, nor to angels, nor to glorified saints, nor to Heaven, but to men on earth; not to our first parents in their original integrity, nor to that happy Eden before sin and sorrow entered it, but to such men as seek within the Church of CHRIST to repair the evil which was entailed upon them by the Fall of Adam. It is of the actual condition of Christians in this present life—not of some one aspect of their condition as seen through a certain theological medium—but of Christians themselves, as they live and move and have their daily being, and are known and recognized of all men, that St. James employs this language: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

The first thing essential to a right estimate of the force of such language is to perceive

that it has respect to Christians as they are in themselves, and in their own moral being.

Observe how distinctly this is indicated in the very form of the expression: "That *ye* may be perfect and entire." The result of patience, exercised in the manner here described, is not to be looked for in the believer's exhibition of that one grace, but in his possession of all graces and virtues. It will not only render him perfectly patient, but perfect in himself in all the elements of a complete character.

We feel that such must be the force of this expression, when we consider that this sort of completeness is elsewhere distinctly spoken of as possible in the Christian, and to be expected of him. What other idea would satisfy our LORD's distinct and unqualified declaration? "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."*

Is not the same idea reiterated by St. Peter, in words that run precisely parallel to these? "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."†

What other idea than this did St. Paul seek to realize when, as he told the Colossians, he labored to present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS,‡ in which endeavor their fellow-servant

* St. Matt v. 48.

† 1 Pet. i. 15.

‡ Col. i. 28.

Epaphras labored with him when he strove fervently for them in prayer (and surely not praying for a vain impossibility), that *they might stand perfect and complete** in all that will of God which they had been so minutely taught by word as well as by that very Epistle?

And once more: was not this result, as being actually attainable by those Christians whom he was addressing, and as being also within the ordinary operations of Divine grace, in the mind and heart of St. Paul when he prayed for the Thessalonians, in almost the very words used by St. James, that they might be "wholly" sanctified, and that in their "whole spirit, and soul, and body" they might be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST?"†

We are not to doubt, then, that when St. James declared that the work of patience would be to render those who were so tried, perfect and entire, he meant it of what they themselves would become, under such discipline, in their inward and substantial character and being. He did not say, Your patience shall be perfected, but *ye* shall become perfect. He was not taking as his measure, that which constituted the perfection of any one grace,

* Col. iv. 12.

† 1 Thess. v. 28.

but that which constituted the integrity of the man himself. And you see at once how vast the difference is between these two points. You may say that such and such a man is perfectly patient, without conveying any idea of his charity, his purity, his zeal, his faith, or indeed of his character at all, except in the one point named. But if you say that he is deficient in nothing—that he is, as a man, complete, you offer to the mind another and all-comprehensive standard by which to measure him. You dispense with the enumeration of qualities, and simply call up the idea of moral and spiritual integrity—the complete combination of qualities; the whole, with all its parts, compact in one. And this is just the idea which St. James expresses. The word he used, which is represented by “entire,” signifies the whole and all the parts that make up the whole; as he ends the phrase, “nothing wanting” to it.

But what shall we say, my brethren, to the idea of a Christian character thus presented to us? Is there any thing to be said, except perhaps what most men would say, that it is impossible to attain such a character? Is there any thing to be done, except to follow the multitude and practically reverse St. James’ words, and be imperfect and partial, wanting

every thing, except two or three qualities that are to be taken in lieu of all else ?

Now I would answer, as to this alleged impossibility, first, that the whole teaching of our LORD and His Apostles is penetrated with the principle that the believer in CHRIST can attain to this completeness of character—this spiritual and moral integrity. It is the basis of manifold precepts—the bulk of the New Testament grows out of it. So that there is no room to question that, in the estimation of our Saviour and our Judge, the moral and spiritual excellence which He upholds is attainable by man. Let us carefully observe, however, in what respect He presents it as attainable, for much of the difficulty which is felt in receiving such a truth may arise from a misconception in this particular. If it be imagined that the precept of Christian perfection is given in the expectation of our becoming stainless in purity, faultless in zeal, irreproachable in every relation which we hold to God and man, it is no wonder that even the explicit terms of Holy Scripture, when understood in such a sense, fail to convince men of the practicability of that which their consciousness and experience assure them is impossible. To the one Being who alone is all-Holy, belongs such excellence as this, and it

cannot be expected of mortal man. Nor is any such expectation found in any thing that was said by our LORD or His Apostles. Their words in reference to this subject, which I have already quoted, require no such interpretation. They must, of necessity, be understood in subordination to the grand truth that absolute perfection, in the *highest* degree of every kind of excellence, can exist in Almighty God alone. But that excellence of which His creatures are capable may be perfect in *kind*, though not in *degree*. In degree, it *must*, of necessity, be immeasurably inferior to the infinite glory of the perfections that shine forth in Him. In degree, it *may* be less even than that to which a creature to whom He has given such grace as He has bestowed on man might have attained. It is only in *kind* that it must be one and the same, in the creature as in the Creator. In this respect, it must be that holiness, the nature of which is determined by the nature of God Himself; and within the scope of which must be embraced every one of those qualities in which we recognize moral goodness, for it is in the presence of them all that its *kind* or nature consists. The interpenetration and running together of all these qualities, constitutes its nature. You cannot separate them, or take one or more away, without ren-

dering the nature another thing than what it was before. Take purity away from your idea of moral excellence, and you do not simply change or slightly vary the idea—you destroy it. If, in adding to faith virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, and the rest, you were to omit temperance or charity, would you retain the whole character except that one fraction of it? Observe, that when you omit one such quality you must admit its opposite, for there can be no vacuum in our moral being—evil must be where good is not. The case being so, will the enumeration smoothly proceed? Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge *intemperance*; or, to godliness add brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness *hatred*. Why the very words refuse to harmonize in one sentence; they grate harshly upon the ear—how utterly destructive of each other are the qualities which they express! They belong to different *natures*; they are opposite in *kind*. And to each kind, all its own appropriate qualities are essential. Moral excellence can consent to part with no one quality of goodness, without ceasing to be excellent. It must be perfect and entire, as it receives its integrity from God, in order to exist at all—for, like that delicate sort of glass of which we read, that was so sensitive to

poison, its crystal purity and brightness will be shattered by the first drop of admitted evil.

You see thus what is intended by the perfection and integrity of a Christian character. It is that no one quality which belongs of right to such a character shall be wholly absent, or wanting through our own wilfulness. God only can say in how much we may be deficient, if we be honestly ignorant of the deficiency. His mercy perfectly accords with His justice and holiness, when He tolerates in us the presence of evil which we ourselves perceive and abhor, and faithfully seek to be rid of. In His tender consideration for our weakness, He may regard the lowest degree of virtue as like dimly-burning flax, that promises to kindle into brightness. But He cannot allow us to intend to be less than complete in the number of our moral qualities. He cannot sanction any indifference on our part to the likeness which we may bear to any one trait of moral beauty. We may not presume to break or diminish the full-orbed perfection of the Christian graces. We cannot think of changing the nature of holiness, or of departing from the pattern which God has set before us. Our copy of it must be complete, in the attempt to imitate every part, even though it be wretch-

edly imperfect when we compare each part of the imitation with the original.

I trust that I have set this idea before you with some distinctness, for on comprehending it, and endeavoring to embody it in your conduct and character, depends the substance of your personal religion. Thus alone do you accomplish that at which religion aims. Herein alone do you find an explanation of the need there is for your having any religion at all. What constitutes our natural wretchedness? Why do we deem ourselves miserable creatures in the sight of God, and call on Him to help us? Is it because we are subject to toil, want, anxiety, disease, and the whole series of calamities that ends in the worse calamity of all—death? Is it because of any outward circumstances of our condition on earth? In all of these things we have, indeed, experience of misery, at one time or another, in greater or less degree; but is there not one unequalled and predominating trouble, from which all these other forms of adversity often take their only bitterness, and which does not, like these, approach us from without occasionally, but abides always within us, sure to be active whenever mind or heart have any thing to do, and disturbing our very slumbers with the visions it creates?—a source of misery that

would be here, within us, were this earth to pass away; and would be here still, were a new world created for us, irrepressible by any external change; so much a part of our very selves that, in our consciousness of it, one portion of our nature seems arrayed against the other, and the inward struggle makes every other form of ill insignificant, and extorts an imploring cry which has a sound of despairing agony in it that is unsurpassable by any other expression of misery that nature ever uttered,—"Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"* This inherent vice of nature, this loss of moral integrity and inability to regain it, this fatal obstacle to peace and perfection which sin has incorporated in us,—in this consists our need; because of this God has had mercy on us and sent His Son into the world, sacrificing His own best Beloved as the token of our extremity, and of His exhaustless pity: simply in order that we may obtain relief from this condition of our own souls, does all that exist which is included under the name of Religion. To this one end must every thing be directed that enlightens the mind, touches the heart, or moves the will. In the co-working of all these

* Rom. vii. 24.

influences, powers, gifts, and graces (however they may be described) in the one practical result of delivering us from inbred evil, and restoring us to the integrity of our being, is found the reality and the power of our religion. For this new creation of ourselves, as day by day it proceeds, an offering of thanks, transcending in depth and fervor even the songs of joy which hailed the first creation, is due to God, whose sole work it is, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

The nature which we have in common, brethren, exhibits yet an infinite variety. No two of us are alike. The elements of character are doubtless mingled in us in different proportions, even from the dawn of our being. The diversities of our condition in this life have helped still further to create our individual peculiarities. The result, truly, seems to be very unequal as it affects our moral standing. As we look mankind over, we see differences that remind us of the changes that have been wrought in the material earth on which we dwell. Fierce fires have hardened its substance in one point; a rush of waters has elsewhere swept it bare of all that once adorned it; the wear and tear of the elements have done irreparable mischief; barrenness and desolation seem to be fixed forever in certain

regions, while in others, the same fire, water, earth, and air, working beneath the same general system of nature, have produced the fertile soil, the genial clime, the happy combination of qualities that most invites to cultivation, and best rewards it. We take these facts, as we find them distributed over the earth, without feeling ourselves forced to account for this diversity. But how mysterious it is, that we find parallel differences in the constitution of mankind; that some natures are rugged and some genial from the beginning; that some are defective from the very excess of qualities, the absence of which constitutes the deficiency of others; that the underlying traits of character are often the very reverse of what appears upon the surface; that untowardness of disposition as much belongs to one man by nature, as kindliness does to another; that one luxuriates in the spontaneous attractions of mind, and temper, and manner, and another is only conscious of his power to repel his fellow-men; that one has every advantage of position, and another every thing against him; that the passions and storms of life have swept with devastating power over natures exposed to their fury, which very natures, in sheltered spots, might have remained as fresh and fertile as others that have only

known the ordinary alternations of sunshine and of cloud:—in fine, that the rigidity of one nature differs from the pliability of another, as the granite peak does from the soft alluvium of the watered vale; that diversities of character are like diversities of soil; and that in all these differences you can mark, here, the unaltered type of a primitive formation, and there trace the history of successive changes wrought by the influence of changing circumstances. Thus mankind, like the material world they inhabit, may seem to display their varied forms and combinations of character under the control of a resistless Providence. One rule of judgment may seem to be inapplicable to them all. They cannot be brought up to the same standard. They cannot fulfil the same idea of moral and spiritual integrity. They cannot overcome the inequalities of their natural and Providential condition.

And, certainly, one kind of material substance may just as reasonably be expected to change itself at once into another, or all kinds together to assimilate themselves into one mass of the same sort, as any such sudden or complete transformation may be looked for in men, or any such reduction of their natural diversities into one uniform pattern of excellence. Religion holds out no such idea; she undertakes no

such impossibility; she has no measure of how much of each kind of virtue, of each separate grace, each separate individual must acquire. Her instruction is simply this to every one of us, without exception: You were created in this image of God. That image has been defaced by sin. It were vain to seek within yourself for the means of restoring it, and you have even lost the idea of some of its essential parts. It is presented to you again in the person of CHRIST your Saviour. Through Him it is possible for you to begin the work of restoration. Study Him, and you will learn in what the integrity of man consists. Study yourself, and you will perceive wherein and to what extent you are wanting. You and your fellow-men are not learning this as in a class together. Each man takes his separate lesson. Each man must work in his own way, for no two begin at the same point, or deal with the same peculiarities of disposition and circumstance. Yet each one has the same end in view,—to form a character complete in goodness. The means and appliances of his labor are the same for him as for all. The same faith enlightens him. The same grace aids him. The same promises cheer and comfort him. And though in every separate case the progress that is made will be different, and

individuals, laboring for one and the same result, will yet retain to the last their peculiarities, and what was to the disadvantage of each one may leave its token impressed upon his work, yet one and the same quality will enable all to stand in the presence of the Great Judge, and bring each man's work in substance safely through the fiery trial—viz., that he set himself in honesty of purpose to make up his deficiency at every point; that he sought to be no less than complete in goodness; that wherein he failed, he deplored the failure and humbly confessed it to his Saviour and his Judge, with a renewed resolution and a fresh effort; that wherein he succeeded, he attributed all the praise to the Grace of God that strengthened him. Thus finishing his earthly course of trial, he will find himself approved as perfect and entire, wanting nothing that became one whose every trial was to struggle for the restoration of his integrity, and who virtually won the reward of that completeness, when he became conscious of his need of it, enlightened as to the means of regaining it, humble, docile, and patient in his use of those means, successful according to the measure of his faith and opportunity, and resolute to persevere unto the end. Such a man has shown that in his inmost soul he has felt his need of a

Saviour; that his sense of it cannot be resolved into an apprehension of something disastrous in his condition, and a wish to interpose a shield between himself and the final calamity; but that it is truly a consciousness of his own inherent vileness and weakness, a sincere desire and earnest effort to take the healing virtues of Divine Grace into his very heart, and to live only in dependence upon Him whose grace it is. The life of such a man is not his own: it is CHRIST living in him. The attainments of such a man do not testify to his own natural strength of character, but to the transforming power of God's HOLY SPIRIT. And his acceptance at the last, with God, his Maker and his Judge, will be the token to himself and to the universe,—not that he became absolutely perfect and entire, but that he utterly renounced his natural condition, he longed to recover his integrity, he patiently, however feebly labored for it, in reliance on the imparted strength of his Redeemer, and he hoped in the end to find mercy, for that Redeemer's sake.

SERMON II.

THE PERFECT WORK OF PATIENCE.

ST. JAMES i. 2, 3, 4.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

A PROCESS is here described, the several steps of which duly succeed each other until the end is reached. It begins at the point where each man among us is inevitably found—fallen into temptations. The endurance of these temptations is the trial of his faith. The trial of his faith produces patience. And the exercise of patience brings about the final result,—completeness of character; or, as it may be better expressed, the integrity of his moral and spiritual being.

On a former occasion, I endeavored to set this result before you as an attainable thing. The result simply and by itself was made the subject of discourse, in the hope of fixing in the minds of those who heard me, the idea

that weak and sinful men were yet enabled, under the Gospel, to become complete in all the essentials of goodness. We considered that our moral being was originally made up of harmonious parts, run together, as it were, into one complete nature, so that no part could be wanting without impairing the nature, and rendering it just the reverse of what it was before—immoral instead of moral, or morally bad instead of morally good. * We considered, moreover, that it is precisely in this that our sinfulness consists: in the destruction of this integrity or completeness of our being, by inserting vicious qualities in the place of virtuous; malevolence, for instance, in the place of charity, or intemperance in the place of moderation. We saw that to the very idea of goodness the presence of each one of its qualities or parts is essential, and that it is simply impossible, in the nature of things, to form a character in goodness, if any one such quality be wholly absent—for that would be to allow the presence of just the opposite quality; and that would be to form another nature, such as exists neither in Heaven nor on earth, nor anywhere that we know of in the universe. Above, is the nature of God; below, is the nature of the devil; between, is that shattered wreck called human nature, by which term, however, we

only describe the temporary condition of a being originally good, which evil has assaulted and overcome, in which good and evil are in hostile contact, which God in His mercy would reconstruct in goodness, but which Satan in malice would utterly sweep away, that between him and the Heaven he hates there may be only desolate and empty space. But not an atom can be found in the universe—much less a living and immortal being, wherein, for an instant of time, light and darkness are made one, and CHRIST accordant with Be-lial. Therefore, we who occupy the middle ground amid the ruins of our first estate, must mean and strive to co-operate at once with Divine Grace in becoming perfect and entire in the one nature that is good, or the sole alternative will remain of being entire in that which is evil.

This fact, then, stands distinctly before us—that we are required to form a complete character, wanting no trait of moral goodness which is seen in the pattern God has given us in His Son, our Saviour. To form this character is to be our purpose and our endeavor, and therefore, when the purpose itself is once fairly formed, and the endeavor honestly begun, at the call and by the grace of CHRIST, in sole reliance on His guidance and support, in

fervent and persevering prayers for the supply of our deficiencies, and the overlooking of our faults, we are in His sight as though we had already attained, though we know ourselves to have scarcely risen above the lowest degree of attainment in each particular. For it is not in the degree that our completeness is looked for, but in our conception of the character, and in the thoroughness of our attempt. These secured, however feeble we may be, however busy the enemy, though he may pull down almost as fast as we build up, it shall not be quite as fast; we shall surely gain upon him; the work of reconstruction will proceed at all points; the whole plan of the original edifice, with the superadded glories of the new creation, will be discernible: and should God stop the laborer at this point, and transfer him and his work to Heaven, who shall dispute that, though the walls have not risen high enough to keep out every assailant, and many parts are hardly serviceable yet, and the top stone has in no place been laid—it is other than true and just to say to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant! in weakness and trembling, amid the tumult and hinderances and insecurity of earth, you have begun a work perfect and entire, wanting nothing that should enter into its design and its progress so far—you

shall complete it with unimpeded and sufficient strength, in the unassailable peace of eternity."

And now, my brethren, since such is the idea of what the Christian undertakes, let us survey the process, as described by St. James, through which it is realized.

It takes its start from the temptations which surround us, in whatever condition of life we may be placed. As it finds in these such effective instruments, let us consider what they are.

Looking back at the period when the Apostle wrote, you readily perceive that the circumstances to which he referred were of a nature to exert the influence which he ascribed to them. When, in professing the Faith, men put their lives in peril, and exposed all that was dear to them in this world to the policy of a cruel government, and the madness of a fierce and heathen people, it was evident to themselves that the effect upon their own character would be thorough and enduring. When, moreover, they were assured that the God whom they served ordained the severity of their discipline that it might rapidly purge away the dross of their sinful nature, and prepare them for that passage into another world which they might so suddenly be called to make, it must

have seemed to them most natural and reasonable to be told that their trials were a matter of rejoicing rather than of grief. Though the pain was sharp, the ease that followed was proportionably blessed. Such "temptations" were a joy indeed to any soul that could rise above the terrors of a brief persecution in view of the martyr's crown of glory. But neither that glorious crown, nor the fiery probation for it, enter into the lot of the Christian at the present day. His soul is not required to nerve itself for this high pitch of endurance. Whatever the impressions may be which it receives, they are not burnt in indelibly with the deep and single stamp of confessorship or martyrdom. No, say you—the shallow and rapidly changing impressions of small perplexities, of vulgar cares, of the tame oppositions of a world that professes to be friends with us, are the only marks that we can bear away from our contact with the events of life. It does not seem to us that, starting from this point, any great results can be reached. He who, in apostolic days, threw himself, body and soul, into the furnace of affliction, might indeed come out purified and resplendent in the integrity of a new-made being, but our trials only lacerate the spirit, and cover it with unseemly scars. We rather look to be consoled

on account of them, than to be strengthened through them. We rather look to religion to heal the wounds they make, than expect to be ourselves debtors to them, for curing the deeper evil of our souls.

I am well assured that wiser thoughts than these upon this subject prevail among us, but in this extreme way I can more forcibly bring out the greatness of the contrast which, I suppose, most persons imagine to exist between those things which St. James called "temptations," and the only things parallel to them existing at the present time.

But now let us ask, what is the meaning of the word "temptation," as he used it? It is evidently not employed with sole or main reference to the enticements of sin: it signifies rather what we usually call trials; and in the connection in which we find it here, does it not signify those greater than ordinary evils, which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man work against us? Thus it would be ordinarily understood, but the radical and main idea which is intended to be conveyed, is found in the very construction of the term which St. James employed. It is something that searches through and through the substance subjected to its power. As a sharp and slender probe might pierce in every direction, and indicate the

slightest variation in the density of the material through which it passed; as the quick and subtle heat might penetrate to the minutest part, and ascertain its quality, so do the "temptations" mentioned by the Apostle fulfil their office. Their efficacy consists in their searching power. They perforate from one side to the other, and pierce through and search out the inward substance of the spirit. What their form may be, is quite another matter than the fact that they possess this penetrating property. In any shape in which they possess it, they are the temptations into which one who is willing to be tried and fitted for Heaven, may indeed rejoice to fall. So far from their being necessarily things that occupy a large space in the world or in our outward life, and that compel all other things to give way to them, the term before us rather seems to indicate an agency of a more delicate sort. It is not seen in the blows of fate that fall with crushing force and loud report, so much as in the keener influences which the DIVINE SPIRIT directs, and that feel their silent and resistless way through fibre after fibre of our being.

What, then, are these probes of discipline, these arrowy tongues of hidden fire, to which the heart and conscience can oppose no bar-

rier? The knife, the hammer, the nail, and burning fagot were, after all, but coarse emblems of these finer tests to which the martyr's spirit was subjected, and the marks of which are visible in the pale countenance, the compressed lip, and the troubled look of one who bears his daily trial, according to the common lot of uneventful times. Is it to you, companions in this discipline of mortal life! that I need describe the means which it employs, or tell how thorough is its work? To be tied to a weary and mechanical occupation, the beginning and the end of which, so far as earth is concerned, is to bring the year round with a modicum of food and clothing, but with a starved and frozen spirit—this is one such form of trial. To possess a natural quietness and reserve of temper, yet to be thrown into the very busiest of life's scenes, with a thousand things expected of you, which you are not apt and know not how to do—this is another form. To be inseparably joined with those whose tastes, views, principles, and standards are so different from yours that they seem never to comprehend you, and by some strange distortion your sincerity, your truthfulness, your justice, your affectionateness, or any other good quality you faintly venture to believe you have, is most surprisingly returned back upon

you in some suspicion of your motives, or open accusation of a wrong—this also is, not one, but a dozen forms of trial in one. To be infirm of spirit, and slow to learn by experience, and conscious of it, yet to be put in charge of others, or made a sort of test of the value of your professed principles—this, too, is a trial. To be keeping guard over a quick temper, an independent spirit, and a strong will, where blows fall thick and fast, and from the beaten anvil the sparks fly round, and the atmosphere is full of the smoke, and smell, and heat of contention; to be assailed in one's just rights, when most desirous of studying meekness and humility; to be straitened in opportunity, when one is just learning to be enlarged in spirit; to encounter the results of past sins after one has forsaken them, and hoped to have done with them forever; to discover, at last, what human nature really is—how intricate, and perplexing, and unsearchable! what depths within depths! what secret chambers, and what inmates of them! what juxtapositions of irreconcilable qualities! what an inner world to be ignorant of, but what a world to see! yet, at last, to see it, and to feel it, and to fear it, as it revolves with all its mysteries within one's own bosom—to be in any one of all these various conditions, which I have rap-

idly enumerated as they came to mind, out of numbers more that would furnish, perhaps, still more striking instances; to become sensible of their various suggestions of infinite concern; to fulfil days, and months, and years beneath their influence, is to endure temptations, which He who made the heart, and to whom the structure of the mind is open, allows to come upon us in precisely these forms, because no others that could be imagined would so thoroughly put all that is in man to proof. No brutal violence, no outward calamity, no tyranny of earth, can compare with trials like these, in power to subject the spirit. There are trials more sharp in action and speedy in result, but none that, for the purposes of discipline, are so sure and thorough.

Our faith comes out of them almost another quality than what it was when the trial began. Indeed, it hardly is the serviceable quality that creatures such as we are, placed amid perishable objects, need to sustain our hopes and make us independent of a passing world, until its value has been learned in these inward conflicts of the soul. The triumph is, indeed, a glorious one, when the servant of the Invisible God, rather than deny a Master he has never seen and forego delights that he has never yet tasted, bids defiance to the world,

and suffers it to take his life away. This is the heroism of Faith. But what avails this example to the multitude, brilliant and soul-stirring as it is, in comparison with that which will assure them that this sublime virtue, which bore the hero-saint to Heaven, will be equally effective to support the spirit that is only called to struggle against doubt, anxiety, suspense, disappointment, disgust, sorrow, and secret pain? Amid these nature has no elasticity or spring; the spur of sudden and unusual excitement is unfelt; the strength which men derive from the sympathy of their fellow-men, or from the mere fact that they are observed by them, is wanting. Can Faith take the place of such stimulants as these? Is the God in whom we believe, one who will come near to us in such moments of obscure and private trial? The certainty that such will be the case is established in the endurance of these temptations, by a kind of evidence that transcends the demonstrations of reason, or the testimony of sight. It incorporates itself with our very being, and is thenceforth a matter of consciousness.

And what follows next upon the proof of faith, accomplished in the long series of trials that have constituted the secret history of many years? "The trial of your faith work-

eth patience?" When it began, it seemed as if some temporary emergency had arisen in the course of life. Hardly ever does a man suppose that the harassing circumstances which have lately made their appearance in his affairs are to last long. No sooner does the trial begin than he anticipates its end. He thinks that already he discerns the means by which it may be made to terminate. He would feel it intolerable were it otherwise. But after a while, he finds himself less sanguine as to the issue. He is surprised that he can bear to think so calmly of it. He said, at first, that it was an angel of mercy in the disguise of an affliction, hoping, even while he said it, that, as the reward of his piety, his gloomy visitant would assume a garb of light. Now he learns that, if his faith be firm, indeed, in the character of the visitation (whatever its form may be) it must sustain him, in a willing and cheerful submission to his trial, till the appointed hour for its manifestation in Peace and Light shall come. Thus out of faith grows patience. He ceases to plan measures for his own relief. He no longer counts the hours, and watches for the indications of a change. He is simply thankful to be in the hands of God. He exercises towards his troubles, whether they come from others, or from the secret sources of his

own bosom, the spirit which St. Paul inculcated, as applicable to one special trial which men esteem among the greatest: "Art thou a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." And thus he waits the issue of the course of Providence, whether tried by the tempers of others, suffering wrongs, contending with untoward circumstances, vexed by his own faults, or grieved by the scanty measure of success his efforts yet have found—possessing his soul, in patience.

The end comes when it is least expected. The scattered elements of success have been drawing together, though intervening objects have hid their movements from him. Have patience but for this last hour, and they will run together in a complete issue! The gold has been tried in the fire. The furnace of temptation has proved the acceptable man. To him it seems that all the hopes, and struggles, and anxieties of life have had but one result—to teach him patience. It is enough, indeed, that such as he should have liberty to cast their care on God, and wait upon His pleasure. But, in the earlier periods of his course he had hoped to accomplish some eminent results in self-conquest, or zeal, or godliness, or knowledge, or charity: such honor was not for him; his call, it seems, was only to endure in faith

and in patience. But while he thus thinks, what work has patience fulfilled in his soul? She found him striving to be humble, pure, charitable, devout, conscientious, truthful, zealous, and the like—but with convulsive efforts; longing to succeed, and wondering why it should be his lot to be so encumbered by difficulties, and hindered by manifold temptations. She composed his spirit; she showed him that his trials were no strange peculiarities of his own case, but the appointed course of discipline. He learned from her, therefore, to be steady and persevering without respect to immediate results; thus, under all his trials, he was still, and the impression sank the deeper into his soul. The perversity of other men, which he endured so patiently, only made him the more meek; his acquiescence in the long delay of happier circumstances in life only rendered him more humble and heavenly-minded. And so through all the graces which were the correlatives of his temptations: while he was patient they were quietly forming; they grew into fixed properties of his soul; they sought each other out, and bound themselves together by the force of their proper affinity; they filled up the gaps and rounded the outlines of his character. While he himself, without the exercise of patience,

could at best have been eminent only in single graces, her better work it was to give time and opportunity for the steady growth of them all, and to present him at last as lacking none that should enter into a Christian character.

Thus you see, my brethren, how this grand result, and every step by which it is reached, are altogether within the compass of the ordinary opportunities and powers of a Christian. The perfect and the practicable are one thing in CHRIST, simply because His eye can look from the beginning to the end, and see the work completed, in the work completely begun; His unerring judgment can distinguish the fictitious and partial endeavor from that which honestly aims at an entire result, and into which the heart is thrown; His love-tempered justice can strike out of account whatever diminution in the sum of the performance may be owing to the conscious infirmity and not to the blind perversity of the will; His Wisdom, Providence and Power can furnish far-reaching and deep-searching tests of the reality of what is done, and ascertain its final quality while it is still shaping the mere outlines and laying the foundation of the future structure; His grace, in supplying all the strength for the labor, can acknowledge it for His own,

and include it within the fulness of His own finished work.

Take courage, therefore, those of you whose hearts are warmed with the desire of attaining such a character, but who find it hard to keep that zeal alive in the face of your discouragements. You may be nearer the result than you think for. If you have reached the stage where patient perseverance amid disappointment and temptation seems the sum of all that you can do, take it as the token that, in ways which you are incapable of tracing, the perfect work of patience may be going on. At least be patient till the end appears.

There are those among you, doubtless, who share the common feelings on this subject, and for whom what I have been saying has had little interest. It was enough to set your thoughts wandering that I tried to fix them on a point so sublimated. You had only to look into your own hearts, or in your neighbor's countenance, to read there the assurance that moral and spiritual perfection is practically unreal, and not to be attained by mortal man. In your opinion, it is a fine idea, but vain. The picture of it is doubtless drawn in Holy Scripture with beautiful exactness, and lives in one Example, but the example is unapproachable, and the beauty only to be ad-

mired, with a sigh that it has gone from earth forever. Give us something practical, and of human interest! But let whatever words of mine you may have caught, induce you to look again, and closely, at the idea which has been thus set forth. What a thought it is, that of a thousand souls here present, there is not one for whom the progress through trials such as he daily encounters to that perfection which he deems as high as Heaven above him, is not feasible! And out of that thousand, shall there one be gained this day?

“O LORD, revive thy work!” In the midst of their years, make known how expectant of these Thy creatures is Thy love! how all sufficient for their needs, Thy Grace!

INDEX.

	PAGE
This Earth differs from Eden,.....	9
as respects disease, &c.;.....	10
but specially in that Life in Eden was unbroken,...	12
and the outer world accorded with Man's nature and destiny.....	15
Men try to live as if Earth were an Eden ;.....	18
forgetting that life is but a fragment.....	19
Precise idea of a fragment.....	24
Eternal World unchanged by severance of Earth,.....	27
but structure of Earth altered.....	28
Standard of moral nature not fragment of our existence,..	29
but in Eternity	31
An earthly standard of morality defective.....	33
True morality includes the idea of God	36
Application of this principle.....	39
Religion and Morality one.....	42
Evils resulting from false distinction between them.....	43
Slightness of apparent cause of Adam's Fall.....	47
His transgression, first sign of presence of SIN.....	48
The malignity of Sin resides in its principle.....	50
Sinful acts alike as indicating the one principle :.....	52
not alike as respects society,.....	53
but as respects the individual.....	54
GOD deals with sin as a principle,.....	56
as such it is the object of penitence.....	59

	Page
A busy, contrasted with a thoughtful penitent.....	61
Three ruling ideas in the Christian's mind,.....	68
their practical results.....	67
A worldly view of Life and Religion.....	72
Lent interferes with it.....	75
Characteristics of Lent	82
Its progress and results.....	84
Natural tendency of the mind to indifference.....	85
Lent designed to counteract it,.....	88
by exhibition of most moving ideas in sacred truth and history.....	90
An unexciting view of Lent:.....	92
not the view of the Church.....	95
Why need the sober Christian be excited?.....	98
Signs of healthful excitement too few.....	100
Christians, as a Body, specially need invigoration.....	103
Lent kept by Christians in corporate capacity;.....	105
to recognize God's dealings with them therein, ...	106
and as the Church's acknowledgment of what CHRIST did for her.....	107
The individual believer's benefit in public services of Lent.....	110
They are a refuge from selfishness.....	112
The world checks the half-formed resolution to keep Lent.....	113
It expects Christians to keep it, but hinders them if it can.....	115
How to get rid of its objections.....	117
Work of Lent in kind the work of Life.....	119
Great significance of every day;.....	120
rendered permanently impressive by religion.....	123
Lent specially serviceable to this end.....	124
No new duties, but new zeal for old duties.....	128
Living by faith, the result.....	129
Only attained by earnestness.....	130
Willing and reluctant keeping of Lent illustrated.....	131

	Page
Tendency of the subject to depress the spirit :.....	135
counteracted by the Church.....	137
Distinction between lightness and levity of spirits.....	139
Men naturally incline to levity.....	140
Traits and consequences of levity.....	142
Incongruous with facts of our condition.....	144
Conformity with these, the principle of our well-being..	145
Church's discipline ordered on this principle.....	146
Relief therein from heaviness of heart.....	152
On this view, Lent not burdensome.....	154
It gains by experience.....	155
The life it teaches, not natural, and hidden.....	156
This statement to be guarded.....	156
In many things, the Christian most natural of men....	158
Certain respects wherein he differs ;.....	159
which are against nature,.....	161
and hidden from eye of man.....	162
Idea of a hidden life illustrated by two common varie-	
ties of character.....	163
The Christian's life of this sort.....	165
Lent instructs us in this life.....	167
Its teaching extends throughout all our days.....	170
Comfort in discerning this fact.....	171
Its connection with idea of the Cross.....	173
Significancy of the name of CHRIST.....	174
The power of His grace.....	176
The attractiveness of His Fellowship.....	177
The reality of His Fellowship.....	178
It consists in having same mind with Him.....	181
animated by the same joyful hope.....	183

DANIEL DANA, JR.,

381 BROADWAY, NEW YORK,

Publishes—

BOOKS PERTAINING TO PUBLIC WORSHIP

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

16mo.

(1) Turkey Morocco, sup. extra, antique or flexible...gilt edges	\$2.50
(2) The same, with clasp	8.00
(3) Turkey Morocco (Second Style).....gilt edges	1.75
(4) The same, with clasp	2.25
(5) French Morocco.....gilt edges	1.25
(6) Roan.....gilt edges	1.12
(7) Roan.....red edges	1.00
(8) Roan.....marble edges	88
(9) Calf Antique, super extra.....red edges	2.50
(10) The same, with clasp.....	8.00

24mo.

(1) Turkey Morocco, sup. extra, antique or flexible...gilt edges	\$2.00
(2) The same, with clasp	2.50
(3) Turkey Morocco (Second Style).....gilt edges	1.25
(4) The same, with clasp	1.75
(5) French Morocco.....gilt edges	1.00
(6) Roan.....gilt edges	88
(7) Roan.....red edges	75
(8) Roan.....marble edges	68
(9) Calf Antique, super extra.....red edges	2.00
(10) The same, with clasp.....	2.50

AN ORDER FOR A SECOND EVENING SERVICE
*in the Churches in the Diocese of New Jersey, with the
Selections of Psalms pointed for Chanting, the Collects
and Hymns from Holy Scripture, for the Church Sea-
sons. Set forth by the Bishop.*

12mo., roan, gilt edges, 68 cents.

Published by Daniel Dana, Jr.

THE SAME ORDER FOR EVENING PRAYER, *with-
out the Selections of Psalms, Collects, and Hymns.*

Stitched, 8 cents; blue glazed covers, 5 cents.

THE UNISON OF THE LITURGY.—*Being an Exhibition
of the Harmony of the Subject contained in the Collect
for each Sunday in the year, with the Epistle, the
Gospel, and the Lessons for that day; and of its ac-
cordance with a corresponding topic in the Church's
Catechism, and in her Articles of Religion. From Ad-
vent to Ash-Wednesday.* By ARCHER GIFFORD, A. M.

12mo., muslin, \$1.00

The London Guardian, in an article on the literature of the American Church, says: "Mr. Archer Gifford's Unison of the Liturgy, an Expository and Practical Harmony of the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for Sundays and other Holy-days, is equal to any book of the kind with which we are acquainted."

ANCIENT PLAIN SONG OF THE CHURCH.—ADAPTED
TO THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

12mo., boards, 38 cents.

For congregational chanting, to be done in *unison* by all those who can sing, the ancient *plain song* of the Church is the only music which will ensure success. The real *Gregorians* have been much talked of on this side the water; but this is the *first* and only work in which they have yet *appeared*. All other publications containing them have so far modified or altered them as to ruin their true effect. In simplicity and plasticity, in strength and dignity, and manly character, no other chants are to be compared with them. The above work includes all the Canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer, together with the occasional Anthems appointed for Easter Day, Thanksgiving, the Consecration of a Church, and the Institution of a Minister. It gives also the ancient notation for all the parts of the Service which may be performed chorally. The *canto fermo* is in the ancient character; the accompaniment is in the modern notation.

THE PREFERRED TE DEUMS.—*TE DEUMS composed by
the Rev. WILLIAM STAUNTON, D. D., and WILLIAM HENRY
MONK, of King's College, London. Selected by the Com-
mittee appointed by the last General Convention, from
among sixty-seven compositions offered to them.* 40 cents.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS AND JUBILATE DEO, *for
Congregational Use. Composed by WILLIAM H. WAL-
TER, Organist of Trinity Chapel.* 15 cents.

Published by Daniel Dana, Jr.

SELECTIONS OF PSALMS; *together with the CANTICLES, OCCASIONAL ANTHEMS, and PROPER PSALMS on certain days; pointed for Chanting, with CHANTS.* By WILLIAM H. WALTER, *Organist of Trinity Chapel, and of Columbia College.* 12mo., muslin, 50 cents.

This work contains all those portions of the Daily and Occasional Services which may be chanted, excepting the Psalter. In the Selections and Proper Psalms each Psalm is preceded by a Chant, chosen with special reference to the character of the melody and its rhythmical divisions. The Chants are of a familiar character, except a few which have never before been published. The type is large and clear, and the whole work is admirably adapted both for Choir and Congregational use.

THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT PSALTER.—THE PSALTER, OR PSALMS OF DAVID; *together with appropriate CHANTS adapted to each portion, as set forth by the Church, for the MORNING and EVENING PRAYER. To which are added, the MORNING and EVENING CANTICLES, arranged to be sung to the GREGORIAN TUNES.*

12mo., muslin, \$1.00

"On the whole, in carefulness of preparation, and in the good taste and practical sound sense with which the selection of the Chant Melodies is made, we are disposed to give this very handsome volume the precedence over every other Anglican Psalter, yet issued in this country."

Church Journal.

OUR CHURCH MUSIC; A Book for Pastors and People. By RICHARD STORRS WILLIS. 12mo., muslin, 50 cents.

"The most thoughtful and practical Essay that has for a long time appeared among us."

Church Journal.

"Were it not for the copyright on this admirable book we should be compelled to transfer large portions of it to our pages."

Episcopal Recorder.

REVERENCE IN THE SANCTUARY.

24mo., 58 pages, 16 cents.

An excellent little manual, full of suggestions important and specially needful at this time.

MINISTERIAL PREPARATION; SERMONS; ETC.

GRESLEY'S TREATISE ON PREACHING. *A Series of Letters to a Young Clergyman.* By the Rev. W. GRESLEY, with Supplementary Notes, collected by the Rev. B. I. HAIGHT, D. D. 12mo., muslin, \$1.00

Published by Daniel Dana, Jr.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS; in Greek and English, with an Analysis and Exegetical Commentary.
By SAMUEL H. TURNER, D. D., *Prof. of Biblical Learning and Interpretation of Scripture*, in THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, and of the Hebrew Language and Literature in COLUMBIA COLLEGE, N. Y.

8vo., muslin, \$1.50.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS; in Greek and English, with an Analysis and Exegetical Commentary.
By the Rev. DR. TURNER.

8vo., muslin, 88 cents.

"Those, whether Clergymen or Laymen, who desire, at the least expense of labor, to obtain a clear and faithful view of the critical sense of Scripture in the best lights which modern learning affords, and under the guidance of a sober, impartial teacher, will do well to make themselves acquainted with Dr. Turner's Works. He has published treatises upon the *Ephesians*, *Romans*, *Hebrews*, and now upon the *Galatians*; also, a work which we have not seen upon *Genesis*."

Southern Episcopalian.

SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS; Written and Preached at different places and times during his Public Ministry of Forty-four years. By Rev. ADAM EMPIE, D. D., late Rector of St. James's Church, Richmond, Va.

12mo., muslin, \$1.25.

"These Sermons of Dr. Empe, prepared for the press since physical debility compelled him to retire from parochial responsibility, will be welcomed by members of the six congregations of which he was Pastor, and may be read with profit by Churchmen everywhere."

Church Journal.

SERMONS FOR THE TIMES.—By the Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY, author of "*Village Sermons*," "*Alton Locke*," &c.

12mo., muslin, 75 cents.

"In our day, when muddy heads do so greatly abound, a volume of such sturdy, pungent, powerful, and illuminating Saxon, is of the highest worth."

Church Journal.

"There is something striking, not to say startling, about every thing the author says, and yet the language is so simple and appropriate, as to be perfectly intelligible to every one."

Calendar.

* * * "With all the faults of these Sermons, we should like to see them in the hands of our Evangelical clergy."

Southern Churchman.

